

When Man Becomes God

A Public Rebuke to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

by

James Prest

Copyright © 2013, James Prest

All rights reserved.

This book was written to provide truthful information in regard to the subject matter covered and bases its claims on religious grounds. The author assumes full responsibility for publicizing this book, and also for the accuracy of all facts and quotations as cited therein. The opinions expressed in this book are the author's personal views of history, interpretation of the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, and other authors. While the author speaks with a matter-of-fact tone, as he is confident that his views are correct, and is ready and willing to support them with history and inspired Scripture should the need arise, he does not hold himself as infallible, nor does he hold up his interpretations of the Bible and Ellen White's writings as a standard to which others must agree, for this would result in setting himself up as God.

Dedication

This book is dedicated in memory of the faithful reformers of the Dark Ages, who lost their lives in defending the principles set forth in this book.

All Scripture is quoted from the King James Version. In addition, everything italicized and bolded in this book was added as emphasis by the author.

Acknowledgments

All acknowledgments go to Him who says, “I know thy works.”

Table of Contents

Dedication	3
Acknowledgments	4
Introduction – Seventh-Day Adventist Vs. Ex-Jehovah’s Witness	7
Chapter 1 – The Point in a Nutshell	16
Chapter 2 – This Book...	24
Chapter 3 – #1: Creeds Vs. Fundamental Beliefs	27
Chapter 4 – #2: Secret of the Great Reformation	33
Chapter 5 – #3: The Forming of the Persecuting Power	37
Chapter 6 – #4: The Criteria of the Definition and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church	41
Chapter 7 – #5: What’s Wrong with Our Churches?	45
Chapter 8 – #6: “All ye are brethren”	49
Chapter 9 – #7: To Think, or Not to Think?	52
Chapter 10 – #8: Degrees and Honors	57
Chapter 11 – #9: Man Vs. God: Guess Who Wins?	60
Chapter 12 – #10: A Church Manual?	65
Chapter 13 – #11: Sola Fide – Finalizing the Separation	68
Chapter 14 – #12: Salvation in a Sentence	71
Chapter 15 – Answers to Objections (Part 1)	77
Chapter 16 – Answers to Objections (Part 2)	86
Chapter 17 – Pure Religion	92
Chapter 18 – Public Call to Repentance and Reformation	96
Petition #1 – Concerning the Fundamental Beliefs	98
Petition #2 – Concerning the Church Manual	99
Signatures – Concerning the Content of <i>This Book</i>	101
A Review of This Book	102

“Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction. The Saviour declares, ‘All ye are brethren.’”

~ Desire of Ages, 414.3

Introduction

Dialog: Seventh-Day Adventist Vs. Ex-Jehovah's Witness

SDA: (knocks on door)

Ex-JW: (opens door)

SDA: Hi sir, I am a missionary for Jesus and...

Ex-JW: Hold it right there, son, I have my own beliefs. What church do you go to?

SDA: I go to the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Have you heard of us!?

Ex-JW: Yes I have, I've studied into your beliefs.

SDA: Oh okay. What do you think about us?

Ex-JW: Well, son, I don't mind what they believe, but they are too much like the Roman Catholic Church even though they teach that that church is the harlot of Revelation 17.

SDA: What!? We are nothing like the Roman Catholic Church. Our beliefs are so different.

Ex-JW: That's true, but while your beliefs are so different, the structure of your church is the same.

SDA: Sir, that cannot be true, where did you hear this from?

Ex-JW: No one told me; I've studied history. But never mind that; do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

SDA: Of course not! The floor is yours.

Ex-JW: Do you know what started the great reformation of 14th and 15th centuries?

SDA: Yes, it was the principle of "Sola Scriptura."

Ex-JW: That's right! Now, why did that principle start the great reformation?

SDA: Because the people got ahold of the Bible for themselves and started studying it for themselves.

Ex-JW: Correct again! Now why was it so important for them to study the Scriptures for themselves?

SDA: Because that was the only way that the people could see that the church was in error.

Ex-JW: Good! Now I have a question for you then. Since the Dark Ages, the Catholic Church has allowed its members to study the Bible for themselves. Why then are the members of the Catholic Church still in error?

SDA: Probably because they don't study their Bibles.

Ex-JW: Probably? You mean you aren't sure?

SDA: Well, I don't think you can say that no Catholics study their Bibles.

Ex-JW: That's true, you can't. And I personally know many of them that do study their Bibles. But despite this, they still remain in error. Why?

SDA: It's because they study the Bible in the light of the interpretations of the fathers of the church to prove their doctrines true instead of trying to study the Bible to understand what it is saying.

Ex-JW: Now you're on to it. Did you know that Catholics believe in "Sola Scriptura"?

SDA: No they don't.

Ex-JW: Where did you hear that from?

SDA: Well, I mean they don't. They accept the interpretations of the fathers of the church, not the Bible and the Bible only.

Ex-JW: Exactly! What Catholics do is that they say that they believe in the Bible and the Bible only *as interpreted* by their church.

SDA: What?! How can they do that? That's so wrong!

Ex-JW: You are right; it is wrong. What makes it worse, is that those who don't believe the Bible as interpreted by their church are not allowed to become a member of their church, and still further, any member of their church who stops believing the interpretations of the church is excommunicated, or, in Protestant terms, disfellowshipped. And this is how the Roman Catholic Church had power over the minds and consciences of men, because anyone

who studied the Bible, and as the result ended up believing differently than the church, was either refused into the church or was excommunicated. Now wouldn't such conditions give quite an incentive for an individual to make sure he finds in the Bible exactly what he is told to see?

SDA: It sure would.

Ex-JW: Now Catholics exalt the words of man to an equality with the words of God right?

SDA: Yes, they do.

Ex-JW: And they do this by taking the Bible, interpreting it, and making their interpretation of God's word equal to God's word itself, because if you reject their interpretation, they consider you to have rejected Bible truth itself.

SDA: I never thought of it that way, but yeah, you are right. But I still don't see how that makes SDA's like Catholics.

Ex-JW: You don't? Do you mind if I read to you from your Church Manual?

SDA: That would be great, but I don't have one.

Ex-JW: No problem, I have one right here. (quickly steps inside and comes back to the door with the SDA's 2010 Church Manual)

Ex-JW: Son, I recommend that you get ahold of this book and study it closely. We read here on page 46 under the subheading of baptismal vow:

"Baptismal candidates and those being received into fellowship by profession of faith ***shall affirm their acceptance of the fundamental beliefs*** in the presence of the local congregation or other properly appointed body."

On page 47 we read point #11 of the baptismal vow:

"Do you know and understand the fundamental Bible principles ***as taught*** by the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Do you purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering your life in harmony with ***these*** principles?"

On the same page we read the Alternate Vow point #2:

"Do you accept the teachings of the Bible ***as expressed*** in the statement of fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and do you pledge by God's grace to live your life in harmony with ***these*** teachings?"

Now, after the individual is baptized and received into the church, we read on page 47 commitment point #11 that he is to sign his name to:

"I know and understand the fundamental Bible principles **as taught** taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering my life in harmony with **these** principles."

Now, lest any think that one does not need to believe the Bible as taught by the SDA church in order to be and remain a member of the church, we read this on page 61:

"The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are: 1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same."

Now, the Catholic Church got her power, not merely by keeping the Bible from the people, but by requiring them to accept the Bible as interpreted by the church on pain of rejection or excommunication, yes?

SDA: Uh... yes.

Ex-JW: So, then, how is your church different than the Catholic Church?

SDA: We believe differently, of course, and, we are allowed to study the Bible for ourselves.

Ex-JW: Are you? Let me read this to you again:

"The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are: 1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same."

Do you understand what this means?

SDA: ...well... yeah. But our teachings are not erroneous.

Ex-JW: That is the exact same claim that the Catholics make.

SDA: ... well yeah... but there is a difference.

Ex-JW: Son, let me tell you something. The Roman Catholic Church got their power by making their interpretations of God word as equal to God's word itself. To reject their interpretations was considered as rejecting the Bible itself. On this ground alone, men were accepted or rejected by the church. So other than beliefs, how is your church different?

SDA:

Ex-JW: Son, do you want a reformation in your church?

SDA: Yes, I do.

Ex-JW: The only way for this to come about is for the principle of “Sola Scriptura” to take hold upon the members of your church, for this is what started the reformation of the Dark Ages. The problem is, is that your church’s official Church Manual forbids “Sola Scriptura.” How so? Because anyone who dares to study to see *if* the Bible really agrees with the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the church is threatened with excommunication. These SDA’s are told all over the place that their church will go through to the end, and that to leave the church is to bring ruin upon their souls. Who then will dare to study the Bible to investigate to see if the church’s beliefs are Biblical?

SDA:

Ex-JW: Son, why do you believe what you do?

SDA: Because it’s in the Bible.

Ex-JW: So says every Christian church on earth. Where did you first learn what you believe?

SDA: My mother and father taught me. But it’s in the Bible.

Ex-JW: When your parents taught you these teachings, did they give you their interpretation of the Bible?

SDA: Yes, but it’s still in the Bible.

Ex-JW: So you accepted the interpretations of your parents, didn’t you?

SDA: Yes, but I’ve looked into it since and their interpretations are correct.

Ex-JW: Are they? How do you know?

SDA: Because they make sense.

Ex-JW: Well of course they make sense. But did you ever actually lay aside all of the interpretations that made sense and actually read the Bible to understand it and see *if* the teachings are true?

SDA: Well no, but it’s dangerous to doubt the truth.

Ex-JW: Indeed it is, it is also dangerous to believe error. If you are not willing to question your beliefs because it's dangerous to doubt what you term truth, then would you recommend a Catholic to follow this same advice?

SDA: No, but...

Ex-JW: No but's. What would you tell him to do?

SDA: Question the established beliefs and study the Bible unbiasedly, but...

Ex-JW: No but's. To not be hypocritical about this, you need to be willing to take the very advice that you would give to someone else. That is, of course, unless you and your church are infallible. Are you?

SDA: No of course not!

Ex-JW: Good, then you should have no problem questioning your church's teaching on the state of the dead. Right?

SDA: Well... That's different though. And the reality is...

Ex-JW: Hold on there. How is it different? You say you are not infallible, yet you plug both of your ears and only want to talk. Do you know why there is no reformation in your church? It's because your church has done away with the principle of "Sola Scriptura" by making the interpretations of the fathers of the church the rule by which all are to be measured and judged, and you treat those interpretations like they are infallible, never daring to so much as question them. And why? I think it is because you are scared.

SDA: I'm not scared.

Ex-JW: Are you sure? Are you not afraid to study in question of the accuracy of your church's teachings? Now as for Ellen White...

SDA: What do you know about Ellen White?

Ex-JW: Oh... Well I believe that she was a prophet of the Most High. And I believe everything she wrote.

SDA: Really!? You should become a... (pause) ...

Ex-JW: No, son, I will not become a member of your church, because they have taken upon themselves the form of the papal power and have forbidden, by threat of discipline and disfellowship, the free exercise of "Sola Scriptura." Again, do you want a reformation in your church?

SDA: ... (thoughts) ...Yes.

Ex-JW: Then question everything, go deep, accept no man's interpretation as sufficient, and the reformation in your church will begin with you.

SDA: So, if you believe everything that Ellen White says, you are essentially an SDA, then?

Ex-JW: No, not at all. Many of their beliefs may be correct, though I do not agree with quite all of them, and neither does Ellen White, but I will not join them because I cannot consent to all of their beliefs.

SDA: So you don't believe the Bible then?

Ex-JW: Son, we just talked about this. I am not rejecting one word of the Bible just because I cannot agree to the interpretations of man as expressed in the SDA's baptismal vow. Now do you want a reformation in your church?

SDA: Yes.

Ex-JW: Do you believe that Ellen White was just as much a prophet as was Jeremiah or Amos?

SDA: Yes.

Ex-JW: Then follow her advice in this, and I quote:

"Some have feared that if in even a single point they acknowledge themselves in error, other minds would be led to doubt the whole theory of truth. ***therefore they have felt that investigation should not be permitted; that it would tend to dissension and disunion. but if such is to be the result of investigation, the sooner it comes the better.*** If there are those whose faith in God's word will not stand the test of an investigation of the Scriptures, the sooner they are revealed the better; for then the way will be opened to show them their error. We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but one who is infallible,—He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life." — {Gospel Workers, 1892 Edition, 125.2}

And says the same chapter further down:

"Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is truth. Suppose a brother held a view that differed from yours, and he should come to you, proposing that you sit down with him and make an investigation of that point in the Scriptures; should you rise up, filled with prejudice, and condemn his ideas, while refusing to give him a candid hearing? The only right way would be to sit down as Christians, and investigate the position presented, in the light of God's work, which will reveal truth

and unmask error. To ridicule his ideas would not weaken his position in the least if it were false, or strengthen your position if it were true. *if the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it.* There must be no spirit of Phariseeism cherished among us." – {Gospel Workers, 1892 Edition, 127.1}

Do you understand?

SDA: Yes, but I'm afraid to do that.

Ex-JW: Afraid? Of what? The Bible? The Spirit of Prophecy? The truth? If you and your church are afraid of those very sources that God has given to us that we might not be afraid, then I am afraid that neither of you will ever know the love of God, for "perfect love casteth out fear." Son, don't be afraid of God. Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth, thus the Scripture says, "ye need not that any man teach you." Are you afraid that the Holy Spirit will fail to guide the honest seeker of truth?

SDA: No, but...

Ex-JW: Then trust Him. If you cannot trust God, then you can never be saved. If we won't look into or consider any belief or doctrine other than what we want to believe, then we are not basing our faith off of a studied and researched conclusion, but off of biased, personal ignorance. Such foundation for our faith will not make it through the testing time. Imagine looking only at the information that you want to see, and then coming to a conclusion. Do not virtually all religions do this? Is not this why they remain in error?

SDA: (silence) ... Sir?

Ex-JW: Yes?

SDA: Please show me how to... to just... (a tear). I just feel like I have to start over and relearn everything.

Ex-JW: And that you must do. But don't be afraid.

SDA: Who are you?

Ex-JW: Well, I used to be a Jehovah's Witness, but saw that they also were not living by "Sola Scriptura." So I started studying the Bible for myself, was soon disfellowshipped, and the Lord led me into the truth, even to the point accepting Ellen White as a prophetess. The Lord will truly guide those who seek Him with their whole heart; I am a living witness to that.

SDA: What is truth? What must I do to be saved? How do I even know anymore? I've been accepting another man's interpretation as the word of God itself all of my life.

Ex-JW: Son, I must be going soon. My wife just pulled in and is here to pick me up. Here is a quote from Ellen White in answer to your question:

“Do you ask, What shall I do to be saved? You must lay your preconceived opinions, your hereditary and cultivated ideas, at the door of investigation. ***If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says.*** If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God’s word.” – {Christ’s Object Lessons, 112.3}

Also... as a last thing, for I really must go. Do not be afraid of investigating the claims of your beliefs very thoroughly. Says Ellen White:

“There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and **truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.** ***We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly;*** neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart. There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ. The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. Many who claim to believe the truth have settled down at their ease, saying, ‘I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.’ But Jesus says to these self-complacent ones, Thou ‘knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ Let us individually inquire, Do these words describe my case? If so, the True Witness counsels us, saying, ‘Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.’” {Review and Herald, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

Fear not son, for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with you. Amen.

Chapter 1

The Point in a Nutshell

The Point

The point of this book is to publically rebuke the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, as a world organization, for placing itself on the throne of God. This will result in calling worldwide attention to issues of grave importance. Lastly, we pray that these issues, studied, will result in further opening the way for the final reformation that must take place before the second coming of Christ.

The Claim

We here claim that the church on an official, General Conference level, has made fallible, human interpretations of God's word the standard of acceptance into His church, thus taking a position against the plain words of inspiration. Failure on the part of others to accept this man-made standard, results in church rejection, whether it is because the individual is not accepted into church membership, or because they are stripped of the same.

The Issue

The reason that this is so dangerous is because it virtually places man on God's throne. Here is how man becomes God:

Man:

- 1) Interprets the Bible
- 2) Makes that interpretation a list of beliefs
- 3) Makes these beliefs the representatives of Bible truth
 - a. If anyone rejects these beliefs, the "representatives" of Bible truth, he is considered to have rejected Bible truth itself.

Thus:

- 1) Reject man's words, and it is equally considered as having rejected God's words
- 2) Reject man = Reject God
- 3) Man = God

The Evidence

#1: Says Inspiration:

"Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. ***This claim God does not sanction.***" {Desire of Ages, Ellen White, 414.3}

"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." 2 Peter 1:20.

Says the Church:

"Baptismal candidates and those being received into fellowship by profession of faith **shall affirm their acceptance of the fundamental beliefs** in the presence of the local congregation or other properly appointed body." {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 46.1}

Baptismal Vow Point # 11: "Do you know and understand the fundamental Bible principles ***as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church?*** Do you purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering your life in harmony with ***these*** principles?" {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 47.4}

Alternate Vow Point #2: "Do you accept the teachings of the Bible ***as expressed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,*** and do you pledge by God's grace to live your life in harmony with ***these*** teachings?" {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 47.8}

"After the candidates have, in the presence of the church membership or other properly appointed body, **answered the questions of the vow in the affirmative, or assurance has been given to the church that they have already done so**, the church should vote on their acceptance into membership subject to baptism, which should not be unduly delayed." {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 49.4}

"The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are: 1. ***Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.*** 2. ... {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 61, 62}

#2: Says the Dictionary:

CREED: 1. A brief summary of the articles of Christian faith; a symbol; as the Apostolic creed. 2. That which is believed; any system of principles which are believed or professed; as a political creed.

Says Inspiration:

"God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority--not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support." {The Great Controversy, 1911 Edition, Ellen White, 595.1}

"The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this holy word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, 'It is written.' Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline." {The Review and Herald, December 15, 1885, Ellen White, par. 16}

Says the Church:

"Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed **and** hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word." {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 156.1}

#3: Says Inspiration:

"Precious light is to shine forth from the Word of God, and let no one presume to dictate what shall or what shall not be brought before the people in the messages of enlightenment that He shall send, and so quench the Spirit of God. Whatever may be his position of authority, no one has a right to shut away the light from the people. When a message comes in the name of the Lord to His people, no one may excuse himself from an investigation of its claims. No one can afford to stand back in an attitude of indifference and self-confidence, and say: 'I know what is truth. I am satisfied with my position. I have set my stakes, and I will not be moved away from my position, whatever may come. I will not listen to the message of this messenger; for I know that it can not be truth.' It was from pursuing this very course that the popular churches were left in partial darkness, and that is why the messages of heaven have not reached them." {Testimonies on Sabbath School Work, 65.1}

Says the Church:

“Although all members have equal rights within the church, ***no individual member or group should start a movement or form an organization or seek to encourage a following for the attainment of any objective or for the teaching of any doctrine or message not in harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Church.*** Such a course would result in the fostering of a divisive spirit, the fragmenting of the witness of the Church, and thus in hindering of the Church’s discharge of its obligations to the Lord and the world.” {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 59.3}

“The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are: 1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church or ***teaching doctrines contrary to the same.*** 2. ... {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 61, 62}

Does it Matter?

When the words of man are placed on equal grounds with the words of God, the church is in grave peril. This is how it was with the Roman Catholic Church. This is why the pope became a man literally viewed as “God on earth.” So long as the pope’s word was given supreme place, reformation was impossible. It was because men like Martin Luther and others held the word of God as supreme, and risked their lives to break free from the crippling interpretations of the church clergy, that the great reformation of the Dark Ages took place. God then had, and “will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible *only*, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.” (GC 595.1) But so long as man’s interpretations of God’s word are held supreme, reformation is impossible. Thus were regarded the interpretations of Roman Catholicism, and thus are regarded the interpretations of Adventism.

The Historical Evidence

The Advent of Christ:

During the time of Jesus, the interpretations and opinions of the church clergy were held supreme. To go contrary to these was to be “put out of the synagogue,” thus excommunicating from the church the reformers, and thus the reformation.

“In every gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact. Because He was so gentle and unobtrusive, the scribes and elders supposed that He would be easily influenced by their teaching. They urged Him to receive the maxims and traditions that had been handed down from the ancient rabbis, but He asked for their authority in Holy Writ. He would hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; but He could not obey the inventions of men. Jesus seemed to know the Scriptures from beginning to end, and He presented them

in their true import. The rabbis were ashamed to be instructed by a child. ***They claimed that it was their office to explain the Scriptures, and that it was His place to accept their interpretation.*** They were indignant that He should stand in opposition to their word." {Desire of Ages, Ellen White, 85.1}

"These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for ***the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.***" John 9:22.

The Reformation:

During the time of the great reformation of the Dark Ages, the interpretations and opinions of the church clergy were held supreme. To go contrary to these was to be excommunicated from the church, and finally, to die a martyr's death.

"The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God's word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. ***They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church;*** and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established teaching of their church." {Great Controversy, Ellen White, 596.3}

The Advent Movement:

During the time of the great Advent Movement of the 1800's, the interpretations and opinions of the church clergy were held supreme. To go contrary to these was to be excommunicated from the church.

"I thought that those who loved Jesus would love His coming, so went to the class meeting and told them what Jesus had done for me and what a fullness I enjoyed through believing that the Lord was coming. The class leader interrupted me, saying, "Through Methodism"; but I could not give the glory to Methodism when it was Christ and the hope of His soon coming that had made me free.

"Most of my father's family were full believers in the advent, and ***for bearing testimony to this glorious doctrine seven of us were at one time cast out of the Methodist Church.*** At this time the words of the prophet were exceedingly precious to us: "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." Isaiah 66:5. {Early Writings, Ellen White, 12, 13}

Here and Now:

Darkness was in the church. Jesus took the Scriptures alone and ignored the creeds of the Scribes and Pharisees. This pressed back the darkness. The light of truth shone bright, and Jesus was crucified.

Darkness was in the church. The reformers took the Bible alone and ignored the creeds of the Roman Catholic Church. This pressed back the darkness. The light of truth shone brighter, and the reformers were burned at the stake.

Darkness was in the church. The early Adventists took the Bible alone and ignored the creeds of the Protestant churches. This pressed back the darkness. The light of truth shone still brighter, and the early Adventists were disfellowshipped.

Darkness is in the church. We are to take the Bible alone and ignore the creed of the Adventist church. This will press back the darkness. The light of truth will shine at its brightest, and the faithful of final reformation, what will happen to them? We read once again from the official, Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual:

“Although all members have equal rights within the church, **no individual member or group should start a movement or form an organization or seek to encourage a following for the attainment of any objective or for the teaching of any doctrine or message not in harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Church.** Such a course would result in the fostering of a divisive spirit, the fragmenting of the witness of the Church, and thus in hindering of the Church’s discharge of its obligations to the Lord and the world.” {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 59.3}

Thus, as God is raising up this people who make “the Bible, and the Bible *only*” “the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms,” and uses this people to start a reformation in the church, whose teachings are not in harmony with the fallible interpretations of the Seventh-Day Adventist clergy, they are threatened with disfellowshipment, just as those of old were in Jesus’ time, the reformers time, and the time of the great Advent movement. We quote again:

“The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are: 1. Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church **or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.** 2. ... {Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual, 2010 Edition, 61, 62}

Words from the Prophetess:

“We have nothing to fear for the future, **except as we shall forget** the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history.” {Review and Herald, October 12, 1905, Ellen White, par. 22}

The Grand Objection – “What you are saying is great, but every point of the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church are all true, so it really doesn’t matter.”

Because this appears to be the grandest of all objections given against the removal of the 28 creedal points of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, we will address it here, unlike many others that will be addressed later.

"There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. ***No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart. There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ.*** The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. Many who claim to believe the truth have settled down at their ease, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." But Jesus says to these self-complacent ones, Thou "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Let us individually inquire, Do these words describe my case? If so, the True Witness counsels us, saying, "Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." {Review and Herald, December 20, 1892, Ellen White, par. 1}

Thus it is evident that such objection has no grounds for its claims. God has been seeking to remove error and darkness out of the church for many years, every time removing a little more error than before, and there is no excuse to say that there is no error remaining in the Adventist church of today. To validate this point even further, we quote the words of Jesus:

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” John 8:32-34.

Jesus here says that when we know the truth that it will set us free. Free from what? Free, from sinning. If the church is still living in sin, if we haven't gone home yet (See COL 69.1), it is evident that there is some truth that we are not knowing, some truth we are not understanding, for if this truth were known, we would have ceased to sin.

Since there is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that all Seventh-Day Adventist expositions of Scripture are without an error, then so long as the Adventist clergy's

interpretation of God's word is made the standard, threatening disfellowship against those who understand the Scriptures differently, there can be no final reformation in the church, for the church will excommunicate the reformation.

Summary

Thus the principles of God's word, and examples in history, testify that this is indeed a solemn issue of great importance. It matters.

Chapter 2

This Book...

Having covered the nutshell version of the message contained in this book, in this chapter we would like to prepare the reader for the much more thoroughly done version which establishes its points a thousand times better than the short version given in the last chapter. The reason for the shortness of the previous chapter, is because it seems that relatively few people anymore will sit down and read a book. Instead, people today want a “just add water,” “microwavable,” “fits in your pocket” version of just about everything.

While the nutshell version of the message contained in this book cannot justly take the place of the thorough version to come, it was given so that those who scan books, picking up something here and there, not paying as careful attention as they should to the context of what they read, have an opportunity to discover the matter rather quickly, yet at the same time making it more difficult for them to pick up on some random sentence in the book and give a report concerning what they thought it was saying. We give the counsel of Scripture:

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”
Proverbs 18:13.

The main part of this book will consist of a 12 part article series that James Prest put together on the subject. Along with this, will be an “Answers to Objections” section to help clarify for those with concerns.

Clarifications

For those who claim that James Prest has no place to rebuke the church so publically on this matter, we quote the following:

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ***Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel,*** and say unto them... Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but ***in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.*** ...Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: ***thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.***” Leviticus 19:1, 2, 15, 17.

“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.” 1 Timothy 5:20.

“Her husband seemed to feel unreconciled to my bringing out her faults before the church and stated that if Sister White had followed the directions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 he should not have felt hurt: ‘Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained

thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.'

"My husband then stated that he should understand that these words of our Lord had reference to cases of ***personal trespass***, and could not be applied in the case of this sister. ***She had not trespassed against Sister White. But that which had been reproved publicly was public wrongs which threatened the prosperity of the church and the cause. Here, said my husband, is a text applicable to the case: 1 Timothy 5:20: 'Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.'***" {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 2, 15.1, 2}

As stated at the beginning of this book, James Prest is not here setting up his interpretations of the Bible, Ellen White's writings, and the few writings of the Advent pioneers, as the standard to which others must come. However, James Prest holds that they are true, and requests that everyone thoroughly examine both his claims, and his evidence.

"Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. ***We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is truth.*** Suppose a brother held a view that differed from yours, and he should come to you, proposing that you sit down with him and make an investigation of that point in the Scriptures; should you rise up, filled with prejudice, and condemn his ideas, while refusing to give him a candid hearing? The only right way would be to sit down as Christians, and investigate the position presented, in the light of God's work, which will reveal truth and unmask error. To ridicule his ideas would not weaken his position in the least if it were false, or strengthen your position if it were true. ***If the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it.*** There must be no spirit of Phariseeism cherished among us." {Gospel Workers, 1892 Edition, Ellen White, 127.1}

"Precious light is to shine forth from the Word of God, and ***let no one presume to dictate what shall or what shall not be brought before the people in the messages of enlightenment that He shall send, and so quench the Spirit of God. Whatever may be his position of authority, no one has a right to shut away the light from the people. When a message comes in the name of the Lord to His people, no one may excuse himself from an investigation of its claims.*** No one can afford to stand back in an attitude of indifference and self-confidence, and say: 'I know what is truth. I am satisfied with my position. I have set my stakes, and I will not be moved away from my position, whatever may come. I will not listen to the message of this messenger; for I know that it can not be truth.' It was from pursuing this very course that the popular churches were left in partial darkness, and that is why the messages of heaven have not reached them." {Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work, Ellen White, 65.1}

As stated in other of his works, numberless are the objections that have and will come, and it is not James Prest's intention to answer them all. It is not because he is unable or unwilling to give an answer, or to study and research the matter out if he has none, but because it is

virtually impossible to answer all of the numberless objections that may come, and also because James Prest does not answer objections to claims that he never made. The objections that will be covered in this book are the objections that he has already received from sharing the information that he has.

The next 12 chapters (chapters 3-14) are the 12 articles that constituted The Final Reformation series that James Prest has previously written. For the largest part, these articles will remain altered, yet for the sake of this book, small clarifications and the likes may be made. The main points and statements contained in these articles shall remain the same, for they already contain the message to be here addressed.

It is highly counseled, for the sake of the reader and others, that these chapters not be read out of chronological order. Some have done this and like things with other of James Prest's works, only to find themselves misunderstanding his message. James Prest does not, and cannot hold himself responsible for the lack of diligence on the part of others to become acquainted with what he has said before making their conclusion of it, and, therefore, also does not hold himself responsible for misrepresentations of what he has said, done, or written.

Also, when James Prest addresses the church, church members, pastors, teachers (... etc.) in this book, he does not, he will not, and he cannot hold himself responsible for those who attempt to cram their feet into shoes that are too small. If the shoe doesn't fit, don't put it on.

Beware of coming to conclusions such as, "James Prest teaches that the SDA Church is Babylon." Nowhere is this taught or concluded in this book. If Babylon and the SDA church bear similarities, that does not serve as evidence to support claims that he never made.

Lastly, James Prest does not quote Adventist pioneers as a source of authority, but points out what they have written and concluded for the purpose of covering church history, and also as he finds that they show themselves well capable of supporting their views from Scripture. Let everyone study for himself.

And with that, we enter the series of articles.

Chapter 3

#1: *Creeds Vs. Fundamental Beliefs*

What is a creed? A creed, by dictionary definition, is nothing more than a set of beliefs. Is there a problem then with a creed, in and of itself? Why do Seventh-Day Adventists have Fundamental Beliefs instead of a creed?

James White said:

“On the subject of creeds, I agree with Brother Loughborough. I never weighed the points which he has presented, as I have since I began to examine the subject myself. In Ephesians 4:11-13, we read, ‘And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets,’ et cetera. Here we have the gifts of the church presented.

“Now I take the ground that creeds stand in a direct opposition to the gifts. Let us suppose a case: We get up a creed, stating just what we shall believe on this point and the other, and just what we shall do in reference to this thing and that, and say that we will believe the gifts, too.

“But suppose the Lord, through the gifts, should give us some new light that did not harmonize with our creed; then, if we remain true to the gifts, it knocks our creed all over at once. Making a creed is setting the stakes, and barring up the way to all future advancement. God put the gifts into the church for a good and great object; but men who have got up their churches, have shut up the way or have marked out a course for the Almighty. They say virtually that the Lord must not do anything further than what has been marked out in the creed.

“A creed and the gifts thus stand in direct opposition to each other. Now what is our position as a people? ***The Bible is our creed. We reject everything in the form of a human creed. We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time. And in this we take a position against the formation of a creed. We are not taking one step, in what we are doing, toward becoming Babylon.***” {The Early Years, Volume I, 453.6-454.3}

Thus James White declared plainly that he was against creeds, and gave a simple, Scriptural reason and example as to why we should be as well. He then stated the position of the SDA Church in this: “The Bible is our creed. We reject everything in the form of a human creed. We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time.”

Question: Have the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church taken the form of a creed? To answer this question, we must first see what a creed does.

As shown above, James White listed specific dangers in setting up a creed. Notice carefully one of the points that he made: “Making a creed is setting the stakes, and barring up the way to all future advancement.”

Ellen White, whom the SDA Church officially holds as having had the gift of prophecy, wrote concerning stake setting:

"How shall we search the Scriptures? Shall we drive our stakes of doctrine one after another, and then try to make all Scripture meet our established opinions, or shall we take our ideas and views to the Scriptures, and measure our theories on every side by the Scriptures of truth? Many who read and even teach the Bible, do not comprehend the precious truth they are teaching or studying. Men entertain errors, when the truth is clearly marked out, and ***if they would but bring their doctrines to the word of God, and not read the word of God in the light of their doctrines, to prove their ideas right, they would not walk in darkness and blindness, or cherish error.*** Many give the words of Scripture a meaning that suits their own opinions, and they mislead themselves and deceive others by their misinterpretations of God's word. As we take up the study of God's word, we should do so with humble hearts. All selfishness, all love of originality, should be laid aside. Long-cherished opinions must not be regarded as infallible. It was the unwillingness of the Jews to give up their long established traditions that proved their ruin. They were determined not to see any flaw in their own opinions or in their expositions of the Scriptures; but however long men may have entertained certain views, if they are not clearly sustained by the written word, they should be discarded." {The Review and Herald, July 26, 1892 par. 3}

To illustrate the importance of the principles brought to view in this paragraph, we will give but one example. There was a young man who set his mind to proving, from the Bible, that the moon was made out of blue cheese. After a few short hours, he produced an article, which substantially "proved" from the Bible that the moon was made out of blue cheese. The article pointed only to Biblical facts as evidence for its conclusion. This case brings forth notable enough of a lesson to plainly show that if men study the Scriptures in the light of an established belief or teaching, or to prove that teaching, that it can be done with ease. How important then that we study the Scriptures, not to prove our cherished theory true, but to try to figure out exactly what the Lord is saying.

Said Ellen White:

"Rome withheld the Bible from the people, and required all men to accept her teachings in its place. It was the work of the Reformation to restore to men the Word of God; but is it not too true that in the churches of our time men are taught to rest their faith upon their creed and the teachings of their church rather than on the Scriptures? Said Charles Beecher, speaking of the Protestant churches: 'They shrink from any rude word against creeds with the same sensitiveness with which those holy fathers would have shrunk from a rude word against the rising veneration for saints and martyrs which they were fostering. . . . The Protestant evangelical denominations have so tied up one another's hands, and their own, that, between them all, a man cannot become a preacher at all, anywhere, without accepting some book besides the Bible. . . . ***There is nothing imaginary in the statement that the creed power is now beginning to prohibit the Bible as really as Rome did, though in a subtler way.***" {The Great Controversy, 1888 Edition, 388.2}

A creed power prohibiting the Bible? Is this possible? The original position of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church was that the Bible alone was their creed. This being their creed, it could not prohibit itself. The most interesting of things, is that with no creed accepted by the Adventist Church but the Bible, it was open to interpretation. Why did the Seventh-Day Adventist Church “reject” any form of a creed, thus leaving the Bible open to the interpretation of any of its members? Would not this be dangerous, and bring in all kinds of false doctrines? Would it not bring in damnable heresies that would scatter the precious flock? Yes and no. Faithful followers of Jesus Christ, diligent students of the word, who would earnestly seek the Saviour with their whole heart and thus receive the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit into all truth, would be the only people that would not be carried away by the false doctrines. While on the other hand the superficial, halfhearted Christians, would be easily led astray, for they would not seek the Lord with their whole heart. They would not love the word of God, they would not hold it precious, and therefore would neglect it. Thus having no foundation in the word of God, they would be washed away by the false teachings of men and the “doctrines of devils.”

There is nothing wrong with having church beliefs, but there is a problem with a church creed. Why? Church beliefs do not restrict its members from changing their beliefs, if so they see that the Bible says they should. A creed on the other hand, does just this. How so? Because if one studies the Scriptures for himself and ends up disagreeing with that creed as the result of his Scriptural findings, he is either disfellowshipped from the church, or is criticized by those church members who claim that he is apostatizing from the faith. Thus, by threat of discomfort or punishment, the creed prohibits the individual from the free study of the Scriptures, or at least, requires him to deny his true faith by keeping to himself and remaining silent.

Example in case: The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement (SDARM) will disfellowship a church member that ceases to believe any of the church’s Fundamental Beliefs, that is of course, after that member is studied with and yet still refuses to believe the Fundamental Belief. And equally so, the SDARM will not accept anyone into church membership that doesn’t agree with all of their Fundamental Beliefs. So then, are the Fundamental Beliefs of the SDARM Fundamental Beliefs? Or, are they merely the creed of the SDARM? Simply, it must be the latter.

Said the prophetess of the SDA Church:

“The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this holy word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, ‘It is written.’ Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.” {The Review and Herald, December 15, 1885 par. 16}

The danger of having established beliefs, teachings, and doctrines, is that men come to view these as being the representatives of the truths of the Bible. Are they the representatives of Bible truth? No. The Bible itself is the representative of the truths it teaches. Shall we limit the book authored by the infinite-minded God to the confines of a finite man’s interpretation of

what he thinks that book says? With all of the mistakes man has been known to make throughout all of history, and still today, on a continual basis, shall we trust to their conclusions and study God's book in the light of those conclusions? Surely not.

The grand problem of making established beliefs the representatives of the Bible truths, is that as soon as someone rejects one of those supposed representatives, their fellow church members insist that they are rejecting the Bible itself. Not so. In this lies the great danger of a church having established beliefs. It is not evil of itself any more than a knife is evil of itself. It's all about how the knife is used, or in this case, how the beliefs are regarded by the individuals of the church.

And to speak even more plainly, when a set of beliefs are established as the representatives of the truths of the Bible, the phraseology of those beliefs are then placed upon equal ground with the Bible. Reject those phrases, and you are considered to have rejected Bible truth. Thus the establishing of a set of beliefs as the representatives of the truths of the Bible, is placing the words of man on equality with the words of God, as it comes to be thus regarded. And the inevitable result of doing this, is to place man upon the throne of God, and makes the authority of that man's words equal to the authority of God's words. Thus we have, to its very core, the secret of the great controlling power of Roman Catholic Church over the minds and consciences of men.

"The creed of Pope Pius IV., which every Catholic is taught to recite, and to which every priest is required to subscribe, thus defines the sense in which Rome admits even her own version of the Scriptures:

'I do also admit the Holy Scriptures, according to that sense which our holy mother, the church, has held and does hold, to which it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures; ***neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers.***'" {August 29, 1895, Alonzo Trevier Jones, The American Sentinel 10, pg. 266, para. 4, 5}

In treating the phraseology their established beliefs as if they were equal in truth and authority to the Bible, has the Seventh-Day Adventist Church taken upon itself a form of popery?

Said Ellen White:

"The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God's word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church; and ***there are thousands who dare receive nothing***, however plainly revealed in Scripture, **that is contrary to their creed or the established teaching of their church.**" {The Great Controversy, 1911 Edition, 596.3}

And is not this the case today in the Adventist Church? Are there not thousands, if not millions, who dare receive nothing—*who dare listen to nothing*—however plainly revealed in Scripture, if it is contrary to the established teachings of their church?

Said the prophetess:

"Do not carry your creed to the Bible, and read the Scriptures in the light of that creed.

If you find that your opinions are opposed to a plain 'Thus saith the Lord,' or to any command or prohibition He has given, ***give heed to the Word of God rather than to the sayings of men.*** Let every controversy or dispute be settled by 'It is written.'" {The Review and Herald, August 13, 1959 par. 2}

Have the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church become nothing more than a creed by which to measure all? Are they not the standard of acceptance into the church, and the standard by which members are repulsed from the church?

Said Ellen White:

"God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, ***and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms.*** The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority--***not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith.*** Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support." {The Great Controversy, 1911 Edition, 595.1}

And to that class that would say that it is not written in the Bible that we should not have a creed or set of beliefs, we would like to present the Scriptural argument of James White. Says the Scripture, "And he [Jesus] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Ephesians 4:11.

Now, let us say that we receive the gifts of Jesus and accept a set of beliefs too. But suppose the Lord, through the gifts (of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers) should give us some new light that does not harmonize with the established beliefs; then, if we remain true to the gifts, it knocks over our established beliefs all at once. Or, should we remain true to the beliefs, we reject the truth of God. The Lord would not have it thus.

Establishing beliefs will not only lead men to look to them as the representatives of the truths of the Scriptures, which they may not rightly represent, but will also help us to set stakes, and bar up the way to all future advancement into light and truth. Those who do this, virtually say to the Lord that He must not work contrary to their beliefs, and if He does, they do not acknowledge it as Him speaking, but rather as the adversary of souls, seeking to scatter the flock. Thus they set themselves up to reject what the Holy Spirit would teach them, and thus, to reject the voice of the Holy Spirit.

"Now what is our position as a people? The Bible is our creed. ***We reject everything in the form of a human creed.*** We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that

thus the Lord will teach us from time to time. And in this we take a position against the formation of a creed." {The Early Years, Volume I, 454.3}

And to close, we give final quote of the Adventist's prophetess, Ellen White:

"Some have feared that if in even a single point they acknowledge themselves in error, other minds would be led to doubt the whole theory of truth. Therefore they have felt that investigation should not be permitted; that it would tend to dissension and disunion. ***But if such is to be the result of investigation, the sooner it comes the better. If there are those whose faith in God's word will not stand the test of an investigation of the Scriptures, the sooner they are revealed the better; for then the way will be opened to show them their error. We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but one who is infallible,—He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*** ...Truth is eternal, and conflict with error will only make manifest its strength. We should never refuse to examine the Scriptures with those who, we have reason to believe, desire to know what is truth. Suppose a brother held a view that differed from yours, and he should come to you, proposing that you sit down with him and make an investigation of that point in the Scriptures; should you rise up, filled with prejudice, and condemn his ideas, while refusing to give him a candid hearing? The only right way would be to sit down as Christians, and investigate the position presented, in the light of God's work, which will reveal truth and unmask error. To ridicule his ideas would not weaken his position in the least if it were false, or strengthen your position if it were true. ***If the pillars of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we knew it."***

{Gospel Workers, 1892 Edition, 125.2-127.1}

Chapter 4

#2: *Secret of the Great Reformations*

The intention of this article is to examine the original position of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church concerning their Fundamental Beliefs and why they insisted on making such a statement so specific. It reads as follows:

“In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, ***we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith***, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our ***only*** object is to meet this necessity.”

{Fundamental Principles, 1872, 3.1}

Notice the carefulness of the wording they selected to make sure that their thoughts were correctly understood. They would have it “distinctly understood” that they had no “articles of faith,” “creed,” or “discipline” apart from the Bible. They then stated very specifically that this synopsis of their faith was not put forth as having “any authority” with their people, nor was it designed to secure “uniformity” among them. They then went on to explain why they even bothered to put forth a statement as to what they, as a people, believed in general, that being, to “remove erroneous impressions” as to what they believed in general. And said they, “Our only object is to meet this necessity.”

Now let us break down what all of this means and why they insisted on stating it:

Articles of Faith

The early Adventist church made it plain that they had no “articles of faith”. What is an article of faith? It is nothing more, or less, than an article, or, statement of belief. And we restate their position on this only to make their point plain, “We wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith... aside from the Bible.” The point is clear enough that no further explanation be given. Has the SDA’s position changed since this early statement of the church?

Creed

A creed is simply, by dictionary both in their time and ours, nothing more, or less, than a set of beliefs. And what said the early Adventists concerning this? “We wish to have it distinctly

understood that we have no... creed... aside from the Bible." Once again, their point is plain enough that no further explanation of it need be given.

Discipline

This one is probably the most important of the three. The word "discipline" simply means discipline. However, we read the entire definition of this word from the 1828 Noah Webster's Dictionary:

DISCIPLINE, n. [L., to learn.]

1. Education; instruction; cultivation and improvement, comprehending instruction in arts, sciences, correct sentiments, morals and manners, and due subordination to authority.
2. Instruction and government, comprehending the communication of knowledge and the regulation of practice; as military discipline, which includes instruction in manual exercise, evolutions and subordination.
3. Rule of government; method of regulating principles and practice; as the discipline prescribed for the church.
4. Subjection to laws, rules, order, precepts or regulations; as, the troops are under excellent discipline; the passions should be kept under strict discipline.
5. Correction; chastisement; punishment intended to correct crimes or errors; as the discipline of the strap.
6. In ecclesiastical affairs, the execution of the laws by which the church is governed, and infliction of the penalties enjoined against offenders, who profess the religion of Jesus Christ.
7. Chastisement or bodily punishment inflicted on a delinquent in the Romish Church; or that chastisement or external mortification which a religious person inflicts on himself.

Now we read the early Adventist's statement again, only to make clear their point. "We wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible." This simply means that, *aside from the exact wording of the Bible alone, they had no statements of what they believed, nor had any rulebook to follow by which to discipline their church members or those who sought to become such.*

Having addressed the first sentence of their introductory statement, we would like to proceed to their second sentence. We state it below as a refresher:

"We do not put forth this as having **any authority** with our people, nor is it designed to secure **uniformity** among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them."

Any Authority

Why should their Fundamental Beliefs have no authority? Were they not representatives of the truths of the Bible, and as such, should they not hold equal authority to the Bible? We

answer decidedly, no. Why? For it results in making man's interpretation of God's words, and the phraseology of that interpretation, equal to the authority of God's words themselves. Thus the words of finite, fallible man, becomes equal to the word of the Most Holy, infallible God. And this, as clearly shown in the previous article, was the very core essence of the success of the papal power to control both the minds and consciousness of men. The early Adventist's, seemingly well familiar with Papal Rome's history, would have nothing to do with it, thus they refused to make man's words equal in truth and authority to the words of God.

Uniformity

Why would the early Adventists say that the Fundamental Beliefs were not "designed to secure uniformity among them"? Surely uniformity in faith would be a good thing, right? Why then be so exact in stating that it was not made to do this? Does not the Scripture say, "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10)?" Indeed it does, and so argued Roman Catholicism against the reformers of the Dark Ages. How then to apply this verse?

There is no danger in uniformity in belief, so long as it does not act as a controlling power over what men are to think and believe, how they are to study the word of God, and what they are allowed to find in that word. It was this that the early Adventists feared to do. They themselves had just recently broke off the yoke of the Protestant creeds to which they had previously been subjected, and as the result, came to a greater knowledge of important Bible truths. For this reason, they dared not seek to conform the minds of any, or of all, to their mold, for this would, as James White put it, 'bar up the way to all advancement' and 'mark out a course for the Almighty.'

Every great reformation began when men both found and took the words of God as truth, truth that is, not to be interpreted in the light of the great articles of faith, the creeds, or fundamental beliefs established by man.

The great reformation of Israel in the time of the reign of King Josiah, began when the words of God—not the words of man—were read and understood, just as they were. The reformation that took place in the time of Jesus began the same way. Jesus studied the Scriptures for Himself, and showed Himself many times to be wiser than the learned "doctors of the law." The reformation in the Dark Ages that took place with men like Luther, again began when men studied God's word for themselves, without the controlling, crippling creeds of the Roman Catholic Church dictating to them what God meant by His words. So with the great Advent Movement of the 1800's, they laid aside the yoke of Protestant creeds, and took the word of God as the only word of authority. And shall we expect, while ignoring all the history of the past clearly outlined, to have a final reformation in preparation for the coming of Christ, while failing to follow the very outline of that which initiated every great reformation of our past history?

We end this article with the 5 Steps of Apostasy outlined by Adventist pioneer J.N. Loughborough, rightly expressing the early Adventist's thoughts behind their non-committal position to having any articles of faith, creed, or discipline:

The Five Steps of Apostasy

"In setting up of this 'abomination that maketh desolate' (Dan.12:11), we see that five distinct steps were taken:-

1. Forming a creed, expressing their faith in man-made phrases instead of adhering to the word of the Lord.
2. Making that man-made creed a test of fellowship, and denouncing all as heretics who would not assent to the exact wording of their creeds.
3. Making the creed a rule by which all heretics must be tried. Many were thus declared sinners whose faith was more in harmony with the direct statements of the Bible than that of those who decreed against them.
4. Constituting themselves a tribunal for the trial of heretics, and excluding from their fellowship all who would not assent to their creeds. Not content to debar such from church privileges in this world, they declared them subjects for the lake of fire.
5. Having thus kindled a hatred in their own hearts against all who did not conform to their creeds, they next invoked and obtained the aid of the civil power to torture, and kill with sword, with hunger, with flame, and with beasts of the earth, those whom they had declared unfit to remain in the world.

"Then appeared on the stage of action one class of professed Christians with a head over them, actually declaring that he was 'God on earth,' persecuting another class of Christians who were conscientiously following the Lord and his Word, - a class of whom it might be said, in the light in which God views them (as was said, of the ancient worthies), 'of whom the world was not worthy.' Heb.11:38." {1907 JNL, The Church: Its Organization, Order and Discipline, 76.1 – 77.2}

Chapter 5

#3: *The Forming of the Persecuting Power*

The intention of this article is to examine Adventist pioneer brother J.N. Loughborough's: *The 5 Steps of Apostasy*. We will quote this section from his book below and then break it down.

The Five Steps of Apostasy

"In setting up of this 'abomination that maketh desolate' (Dan.12:11), we see that five distinct steps were taken:-

1. Forming a creed, expressing their faith in man-made phrases instead of adhering to the word of the Lord.
2. Making that man-made creed a test of fellowship, and denouncing all as heretics who would not assent to the exact wording of their creeds.
3. Making the creed a rule by which all heretics must be tried. Many were thus declared sinners whose faith was more in harmony with the direct statements of the Bible than that of those who decreed against them.
4. Constituting themselves a tribunal for the trial of heretics, and excluding from their fellowship all who would not assent to their creeds. Not content to debar such from church privileges in this world, they declared them subjects for the lake of fire.
5. Having thus kindled a hatred in their own hearts against all who did not conform to their creeds, they next invoked and obtained the aid of the civil power to torture, and kill with sword, with hunger, with flame, and with beasts of the earth, those whom they had declared unfit to remain in the world.

"Then appeared on the stage of action one class of professed Christians with a head over them, actually declaring that he was 'God on earth,' persecuting another class of Christians who were conscientiously following the Lord and his Word, - a class of whom it might be said, in the light in which God views them (as was said, of the ancient worthies), 'of whom the world was not worthy.' Heb.11:38." {1907 JNL, The Church: It's Organization, Order and Discipline, 76.1 – 77.2}

Point #1: Forming a creed, expressing their faith in man-made phrases instead of adhering to the word of the Lord.

As shown in the two previous articles, the early Adventist's were against all forms of creeds. Why? Because they did not, as James White expressed, 'want to take one step toward becoming Babylon.' The "five steps" from J.N. Loughborough's view on this are listed above,

and the early pioneers saw that there was a danger that they should follow the same course as did Rome.

Said Ellen White:

"The term '**Babylon**'--confusion--may be appropriately applied to these bodies, all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects, with widely conflicting **creeds** and theories." {The Great Controversy, 1911 Edition, 383.1}

Now, looking into the history of the Adventist church itself, they were insistent that they have no form of creed or beliefs whatsoever. However, to combat false reports concerning what Adventist's were said to believe, they made a list of what they as a people believed in general. It was in no way to be taken for "articles of faith" a "creed" or anything of the likes. Unfortunately though, as the studious pioneers died, and the church was flooded by those coming out of said Babylon, the members of the church came to treat the Fundamental Beliefs like they were a creed. Thus, while they were technically stated to be Fundamental Beliefs, due to how the members of the SDA church came to regard them, the Fundamental Beliefs took the form of a creed.

One young man expressed it thus, "If you build a boat, and call it an ark, is it no longer a boat?" And as another has put it, "Are you the thing defined if you meet all of the criteria of the definition?" The point in case: Call them fundamental beliefs, call them a mere statement of faith, call them nothing more than unofficial opinions, but because they play every single role of a creed, *they are a creed*.

Point #2: Making that man-made creed a test of fellowship, and denouncing all as heretics who would not assent to the exact wording of their creeds.

Many would say that the early Adventist's were a little bit too hard core in making such a statement as this. Were they? We would ask the reader to seriously stop and think about this. This point is essentially saying that man's interpretation of God's word must be accepted or you cannot be accepted into the church and thus receive its benefits. Was it not this way with the Roman Church? Is not this the very essence of Catholicism?

Said Ellen White concerning the Jewish scribes and elders and their dealings with Jesus:

"They urged Him to receive the maxims and traditions that had been handed down from the ancient rabbis, but He asked for their authority in Holy Writ. He would hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; but He could not obey the inventions of men. Jesus seemed to know the Scriptures from beginning to end, and He presented them in their true import. The rabbis were ashamed to be instructed by a child. ***They claimed that it was their office to explain the Scriptures, and that it was His place to accept their interpretation.*** They were indignant that He should stand in opposition to their word.

"They knew that no authority could be found in Scripture for their traditions. They realized that in spiritual understanding Jesus was far in advance of them. Yet they were angry because He did not obey their dictates. ***Failing to convince Him, they sought Joseph and Mary, and set before them His course of noncompliance. Thus He suffered rebuke and censure.***" {The Desire of Ages, 85.2}

Thus, even in Jesus' time, the church was exercising the very principle which would exalt man's words over the words of God and finally establish the papacy—the mysterious principle of interpretation. We claim that we believe God's word, and God's word alone, so does Rome, in light of course, of the interpretations of the fathers. And can not the same happen in any church or people following the same path as she did?

Point #'s 3 & 4: (3) Making the creed a rule by which all heretics must be tried. Many were thus declared sinners whose faith was more in harmony with the direct statements of the Bible than that of those who decreed against them. (4) Constituting themselves a tribunal for the trial of heretics, and excluding from their fellowship all who would not assent to their creeds. Not content to debar such from church privileges in this world, they declared them subjects for the lake of fire.

These two points are merged together for sake of simplicity. Now, why is there a danger in trying "heretics" by the established creed, or, in Adventist terms, Fundamental Beliefs? Herein lies the danger. If we test man by man's word, then the one on trial cannot defend his position with God's word. Some would say that he could, and it is true that he should, but why does this seemingly have no weight with those holding to the creed? It is simple. The Fundamental Beliefs have come to be viewed as the "simplified" version of the truths of God's words, therefore, when the tried individual would defend his beliefs with the word of God, *which is open to interpretation*, those running the tribunal hold to the simplified version of God's word, which is *not* open to interpretation. Why not?

No one needs an interpretation for any said book of the day in order to understand what it means. Modern language is too simple to misinterpret to anyone that has knowledge of the language in which they are reading. Thus the Fundamental Beliefs cannot, in most cases, be reinterpreted to mean something else. For this and other obvious reasons, those running the tribunal will never concede to the word of God over the "simplified" version of the word of God.

Thus it is plain that the one on trial for his beliefs, no matter how much Bible he quotes, will not be heard in the court room. And for this reason, we would even go so far as to say that, not only is the phraseology of man's words held on equal grounds with God's word, but it is even placed above God's word. The final verdict then will be decided, not by the word of God and the word of God only, but by the word of man, and the word of man only.

Point #5: Having thus kindled a hatred in their own hearts against all who did not conform to their creeds, they next invoked and obtained the aid of the civil power to torture, and kill with sword, with hunger, with flame, and with beasts of the earth, those whom they had declared unfit to remain in the world.

In the last two points it was made plain that said “heretics” were judged by man’s word and man’s word only. This point however, is simply the executive judgment of that which was determined in the investigative judgment. In this executive judgment, man obtains the aid of civil power to persecute those who would not concede to the words of man over the words of God.

Concerning this point, we would like to look at what Ellen White says in The Great Controversy:

“As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message [a belief only held in Adventism], but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. ***They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.***” {The Great Controversy, 1911 Edition, 608.2}

Thus, in their own book, is predicted the fall of a “large class” of Adventists who will “become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren” and that these apostates will then seek “to stir up the rulers against them,” in this, fulfilling the fifth and final step of apostasy outlined by J.N. Loughborough.

Conclusion

The Adventist church, on however large or small a scale it may be, have taken the first 4 of the 5 steps in the apostasy as outlined by Adventist pioneer J.N. Loughborough. Not every step has been taken to the fullest degree perhaps, and so we leave it with the reader to decide what he or she may think. The point in case: Adventists are marching down the same path as did Rome, and, as their own book prophetically records, will reach the final stage of apostasy and seek to persecute those of whom they were once a part. Shall we join them in that apostasy? Or shall we quickly retrace those steps?

Chapter 6

#4: The Criteria of the Definition and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

The intention of this article is to seriously consider the things brought to view in the three previous articles and to compare them with the official positions of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church.

Before we quote from the SDA's official Church Manual, we would first like to review some of what has been covered in the three previous articles.

In 1861, James White said:

*"Now what is our position as a people? **The Bible is our creed. We reject everything in the form of a human creed. We take the Bible and the gifts of the Spirit; embracing the faith that thus the Lord will teach us from time to time. And in this we take a position against the formation of a creed. We are not taking one step, in what we are doing, toward becoming Babylon.**" {The Early Years, Volume I, 454.3}*

In 1872, the SDA Church printed the following introductory paragraph to their Fundamental Beliefs:

*"In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, **we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them**, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our **only** object is to meet this necessity."*
{Fundamental Principles, 1872, 3.1}

The reasons that the early Adventists refused to accept anything that had the form of a human creed, was because they realized that as soon as they did, man's words would be placed upon equal grounds, yea, on even higher grounds than the words of God Himself, thus creating a type of image to the beast power (understood by them to be Papal Rome). By the statements that they made, they claimed that they had no beliefs or disciplinary rules, saving for the exact wording of the Bible alone. They had just come out from under the crippling effects of the Protestant creeds of their time, and refused to place upon their brethren a burden which they themselves were unable to bear.

Now we will compare their carefully worded statements with the official statements of the SDA Church that come directly from their 2010 Church Manual.

On page 46 of their Church Manual, we read under the subtitle of *Baptismal Vow*:

“Baptismal candidates and those being received into fellowship by profession of faith **shall affirm their acceptance of the fundamental beliefs** in the presence of the local congregation or other properly appointed body.”

On page 47 we read point number 11 of this baptismal vow:

“Do you know and understand the fundamental Bible principles **as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church?** Do you purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering your life in harmony with **these** principles?”

For those vowing under the Alternate Vow, we read point number 2 on the same page:

“Do you accept the teaching of the Bible **as expressed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church**, and do you pledge by God’s grace to live your life in harmony with **these** teachings?”

On page number 49, we read point number 11 of the Commitment which they are to sign after being accepted into the church:

“I know and understand the fundamental Bible principles **as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.** I purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering my life in harmony with **these** principles.”

On the same page, we read the following under the subheading of, *Voting Acceptance Subject to Baptism*:

“After the candidates have, in the presence of the church membership or other properly appointed body, **answered the questions of the vow in the affirmative, or assurance has been given to the church that they have already done so, the church should vote on their acceptance into membership** subject to baptism, which should not be unduly delayed.”

And lest any be in doubt as to the necessity of the prospective member, to receive with full acceptance the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, we read point number one on the list of sufficient reasons for church discipline under the subheading of, *Reasons for Discipline*:

"The reasons for which members shall be subject to discipline are:

1. *Denial of faith in the fundamentals of the gospel and in the fundamental beliefs of the Church or teaching doctrines contrary to the same.*
2. ..."

Thus the Seventh-Day Adventist Church has officially exalted the words of man to an equal level with the words of God, and as shown in the previous article, potentially even higher than the words of God. And to our great sadness, in making the denial of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Church a sufficient reason for church discipline, essentially ending in the disfellowshipment of the said creed violator, the SDA Church has officially stated that which makes them guilty of taking step number 4 in Loughborough's list of apostasy. And as we saw in the previous article, it is prophesied that some of them will seek to bring upon the faithful that which is defined in the final step of apostasy, namely, calling upon the aid of the civil powers to persecute the righteous.

Need it be made any plainer? The position of the early Adventists was that they utterly refused to accept anything in the form of a set of beliefs or discipline, saving for the exact wording of the Bible alone. But now, in this our day, they have not only made a set of beliefs, but have made that set of beliefs a test of fellowship for someone to enter the church, the denial of which is sufficient reason to remove them from the church (church "discipline"). And, lest any seek to oppose the papal phraseology of man as manifested in the great 28, they say this, once again from their official Church Manual:

"Although all members have equal rights within the church, ***no individual member or group should start a movement*** or form an organization ***or seek to encourage a following for the attainment of any objective or for the teaching of any doctrine or message not in harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Church. Such a course would result in the fostering of a divisive spirit, the fragmenting of the witness of the Church,*** and thus in hindering of the Church's discharge of its obligations to the Lord and the world.

But it doesn't end here, the papal hierarchy of the Adventist Church reserves to themselves the right to make a test of fellowship. We read on page 63 of their Church Manual under the subheading of, *No Additional Tests of Fellowship*:

"No minister, congregation, or conference has authority to establish tests of fellowship. This authority rests with the General Conference in session. Anyone seeking to apply tests other than those herein set forth does not, therefore, properly represent the Church. (See 1T 207.)"

And now, the words of Paul to Timothy:

"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things." 2 Timothy 2:7.

Very different indeed is the spirit expressed here, in comparison what that falsely usurped authority which says, in a rather deceptive tone, "What we teach is the truth of God. Accept it, or you cannot be part of His church."

I, _____, accept the Scriptures as my only creed, and no matter how much my beliefs may or may not agree with the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, I herein reject them for what they have become, what they are, what they represent, and what they do; that is, a creed power which prohibits the Bible as surely as Rome did, though in a subtler way. I will not recant from this position, nor in the least depart from it, for the Lord is able to keep me from falling.

Chapter 7

#5: What's Wrong with Our Churches?

In the 4 previous articles, we've seen the great dangers of a church having an established set of beliefs. In this article, we desire to delve even deeper into some the problems of having the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. To begin, we would like to look at the list of creedal points. Here they are:

1. Holy Scriptures
2. Trinity
3. Father
4. Son
5. Holy Spirit
6. Creation
7. Nature of Man
8. Great Controversy
9. Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ
10. Experience of Salvation
11. Growing in Christ
12. Church
13. Remnant and its Mission
14. Unity in the Body of Christ
15. Baptism
16. Lord's Supper
17. Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
18. The Gift of Prophecy
19. Law of God
20. Sabbath
21. Stewardship
22. Christian Behavior
23. Marriage and the Family
24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary
25. Second Coming of Christ
26. Death and the Resurrection
27. Millennium and the End of Sin
28. New Earth

Quite a list isn't it? And yet our beloved brother Paul, perhaps the greatest evangelist of all time, said to the Corinthians, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:2.

Said Ellen White:

"Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel's message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; ***but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out.*** It is at the cross of Christ that mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other. The sinner must be led to look to Calvary; with the simple faith of a little child he must trust in the merits of the Saviour, accepting His righteousness, believing in His mercy."

{Gospel Workers, 1915 Edition, 156.2}

"By many who have been engaged in the work for this time, Christ has been made secondary, and theories and arguments have had the first place. The glory of God that was revealed to Moses in regard to ***the divine character has not been made prominent.***"

{The Review and Herald, March 20, 1894 par. 1}

"He [Cain] brought to the Lord the fruit of the ground, which in itself was acceptable in God's sight. Very good indeed was the fruit; but the virtue of the offering -- the blood of the slain lamb, representing the blood of Christ -- was lacking. ***So it is with Christless sermons. By them men are not pricked to the heart; they are not led to inquire, What must I do to be saved?***"

{Gospel Workers, 1915 Edition, 156.1}

"Theoretical discourses are essential, that all may know the form of doctrine and see the chain of truth, link after link, uniting in a perfect whole. ***But no discourse should ever be delivered without presenting Christ and Him crucified as the foundation of the gospel,*** making a practical application of the truths set forth, and impressing upon the people the fact that the doctrine of Christ is not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus."

{Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, 394.3}

The questions are asked, "Why are our churches dead and lacking the love of Jesus? Why is it so hard to bring people to Christ? Why are our children not interested in the gospel?" But the real question is, "Where has been our focus?"

The sad reality is that SDA's, as a people in general, seem to scare away those outside of the church. How so? By coming at them with the strange doctrines of the State of the Dead, the Mark of the Beast, the Little Horn of Daniel 7, and all the symbolic conspiracies of Daniel and Revelation, none of which, have power to save the souls of the hearers or bring the peace of Jesus into their hearts.

The souls of men are dying, thirsty with death-like thirst for the fountains of the Water of Life. Many of them are striving to provide for themselves and their families that are rapidly shattering to atoms. They have no peace, no hope, no assurance. Jesus places us in connection with these thirsty, inquiring souls, that we might impart to them the satisfying knowledge of His caring, saving love. And how do we respond? We blaze them with the uncomfortable teachings of the Investigative Judgment and shovel to them the sands of John's Apocalyptic horrors of the Beast power, that they may drink them and have life.

Seventh-Day Adventists, do you want to know why souls are not being led to the Saviour? It is because you are not leading them there, but instead are splitting hairs over whether or not there is one, two, or three Persons in the Godhead. Instead of showing them how to accept the crucified Saviour that they might have life, we are focusing our time on teaching them what is going to happen to them after they die. Instead of helping prepare them for the second coming of Christ, we spend our time fighting with them over what it is going to look like. Instead of showing them how they can have victory in Jesus, "by the blood of the everlasting covenant," we are trying to make Revelation 12:17 say that the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy which they must join. This is the great sin of the church today. They have almost wholly left Christ out of their reckoning, and are scaring away the sheep that Jesus is bidding follow Him.

The church has lost her focus. She spends years studying with people all 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the church so that they can be baptized and accepted as members into the church, but fail to realize that a mere consent to these theories will never—ever—save even a single soul. Even the outward observance of keeping all the commandments of God will fail of bringing in the sheaves of earth's final harvest. A great work must be done that has not yet been done.

If the church were not so *preoccupied*, in teaching the dry theories of many of the 28 creedal points—which should not exist—but instead focused on Christ and Him crucified, there would be a change seen in the hearts and lives of the church members, their children, and those visiting the church. The creedal power has required missionaries to split up their focus from being on the crucified Redeemer, insisting that her points must be taught and emphasized lest souls be led into midnight error. Must they? No. The creedal power of Rome is to have no weight with those whose duty it is to preach Christ.

If we would desire to see success in the work, a new plan must be initiated and carried forward. Instead of presenting the many different, and unjustly required, doctrines of the church, let us preach Christ alone, until our listeners are converted. Now, once they have received Christ into their hearts and lives and are manifesting the fruits of the Spirit, let them be received into the church. *Then*, let them be taught by the members of the church other doctrines, not because they are required to know them, but so that they might know of the great and special work of our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

Brethren, it is written that the angels in heaven rejoice over the one sinner that repents. Why then, are we so focused on teaching that which will never bring a soul to the foot of the cross? Shall we expect that in doing this, heaven's arches shall ring? Shall we say that the angels rejoice when a lost sheep accepts the theoretical correctness of the SDA's official position on The State of the Dead? Shall we begin singing, while the angels of heaven are still, patiently waiting with eagerness to strike the first note? *We should be ashamed of ourselves!* While we are singing over our supposed success, the angels are shedding tears over the blindness of the church.

And what shall we do then? Shall we allow the popish power of the Adventist creed to bring souls to ruin and lavish the blood of these souls on the hands of the members of the church? No. The Adventist creed must go down, for she has wreaked havoc on the church, and lays at the foundation of many a sin. And how shall you respond dear reader? What shall you do?

The controlling creed power threatens wrath and separation from the church against all who oppose her, but who is she that we should bow to her dogmas? The final test to be brought upon the world will be on whether or not men will show their allegiance to God by obedience to His word, or if they will show their allegiance to man by obedience to man's word. And is not this our test now? Shall we shrink from the conflict and surrender the victory over to the enemy? We shall not. The souls of men are at stake, and we shall not flinch from fighting diligently for them.

Chapter 8

#6: “All ye are brethren”

The five previous articles pointed out that requiring men to accept the 28 Fundamental Beliefs prior to being baptized is requiring them to accept another man's interpretation of God's word as if it were God's word itself. Also, we showed the danger of doing this and the sins that result. In this article however, we would like to investigate another principle upon which much error and sin make their foundation in the church, and which holds fairly equal grounds with that which has previously been discussed. We read the words of Jesus:

“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Matthew 23:8-12.

In these words is embodied that great principle which effectually stunts the growth of that noxious weed which leads to that papal, self-exaltation of men which results in placing the words of man on equality with the words of God. Said the Saviour, “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.”

There is no doubt that in God's church there are apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, bishops, deacons, elders... etc. However, while these are the positions of *trust* with which men are privileged to take a part, Jesus clearly shows Himself against addressing these individuals by titles. Why? Answers Jesus, “For one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” The Saviour would have His followers recognize that all men are equal, and that no one need be viewed as higher or more important based off of position or rank. While teachers and fathers are, Jesus would have us know that our relation to them is esteemed by God to be on an equal brotherhood, for we have only one above us, one master, one father, one teacher, which is Christ.

Said Ellen White:

“He [Jesus] also reproved the vanity shown in coveting the title of rabbi, or master. **Such a title, He declared, belonged not to men, but to Christ. Priests, scribes, and rulers, expounders and administrators of the law, were all brethren, children of one Father. Jesus impressed upon the people that they were to give no man a title of honor indicating his control of their conscience or their faith.**

If Christ were on earth today, surrounded by those who bear the title of ‘Reverend’ or ‘Right Reverend,’ would He not repeat His saying, ‘Neither be ye called masters: for One is your Master, even Christ’? The Scripture declares of God, ‘Holy and reverend is His name.’ Psalm 111:9. ***To what human being is such a title befitting? How little does man reveal of***

the wisdom and righteousness it indicates! How many of those who assume this title are misrepresenting the name and character of God! Alas, how often have worldly ambition, despotism, and the basest sins been hidden under the broidered garments of a high and holy office! {The Desire of Ages, 613.2, 3}

Since all men are equal and no one is so much as to even be addressed as being higher than another, we would like to pose a question. Who are these men in the church, that their interpretation of God's word is better than mine? If those in higher positions of trust are my equal, what gives them a right over me, to decide what is and what is not a correct interpretation of the Scriptures? What makes their interpretation more accurate and mine less accurate? Why are their interpretations of God's word made a test of fellowship, and mine are not? Why are their interpretations of God's word made equal in truth and authority to God's word and mine are not? Are we not all equals? Are we not all liable to err? From whence comes their authority over me when Jesus effectually flattened all authority of men over other men in His spiritual kingdom when He said, "*One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren*"?

Says the Scripture, "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." (James 2:9.) To have respect of persons, simply means to regard some men as higher, others as lower, and to treat them as such. Now, if I regard those in positions of trust as higher than me, and willingly consent to give to them the right and authority to decide what is and what is not a correct interpretation of the Scriptures, and consent for them to make their interpretations a rule, a test of fellowship by which all are to be judged, then do I not have respect of persons? Do I not place them on a higher level than other men, reserving to them the right to interpret the Scriptures and make those interpretations a test, while at the same time I place others on a lower level, and to these lower ones are reserved only the right to accept the interpretations and submit themselves to the supposed "higher authority"? If in this I have respect of persons, do I not then commit sin? Am I not then convinced of the law as a transgressor?

Said Ellen White:

Instead of appointing one to be their head, Christ said to the disciples, "Be not ye called Rabbi;" "neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." Matthew 23:8, 10.

"The head of every man is Christ." God, who put all things under the Saviour's feet, "gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22, 23. ***The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man. Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction.***

The Saviour declares, "All ye are brethren." All are exposed to temptation, and are liable to error. Upon no finite being can we depend for guidance. The Rock of faith is the living presence of Christ in the church. Upon this the weakest may depend, and those who think themselves the strongest will prove to be the weakest, unless they make Christ their efficiency. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." The Lord

"is the Rock, His work is perfect." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." Jeremiah 17:5; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 2:12. {The Desire of Ages, 414.3, 3}

Says the Scripture:

"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." 2 Peter 1:20.

This is simply to say that no man, nor group of men, can get together and independently and privately interpret the Scriptures for others, much less make those interpretations a test of fellowship into God's church.

Kind brethren, beloved equals, a final reformation must take place before we can expect our only Master to return. We must cease to be respecters of persons. We must cease to accept the interpretations of man's word as equal to God's word. We must root out of our churches the withering effects of self-appointed human authority. The most precious message of righteousness by faith, the final message to be preached to the world, cannot take root in men's hearts while their ears are plugged with the filters of human invention.

Brothers and Sisters, how shall we respond to this knowledge? Shall we be weak and vacillating and do nothing for the cause of reformation? Shall we stagger at the creed power and papal hierarchy that has successfully rooted itself so deeply in our churches? Shall we accept defeat and allow the adversary of souls to wreak havoc on the minds and consciences our fellow brethren because we just won't bother to choose the right because it seems a difficult and uncertain thing to do?

We close with the words of our sister in Christ, Ellen White:

Some men have no firmness of character. They are like a ball of putty and can be pressed into any conceivable shape. They are of no definite form and consistency, and are of no practical use in the world. This weakness, indecision, and inefficiency must be overcome. There is an indomitableness about true Christian character which cannot be molded or subdued by adverse circumstances. Men must have moral backbone, an integrity which cannot be flattered, bribed, or terrified. {Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, 297.1}

(Note: To those who would say that to remove the 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and to cease to give authoritative titles to those in positions of trust would be to remove all order and organization in the church, we would answer plainly, No it would not. All that would result is removing man from the throne of God and reserving to the Lord that which alone belongs to Him. It is not disorderly to remove man from God's throne.)

Chapter 9

#7: To Think, or Not to Think

In article number 6, we showed how that by respect of persons, some men are placed on higher levels than others which results in exalting their words to an equal level with God's words. In this article, we would like to examine that phenomenal, unquestioning acceptance of this.

We would like to ask why, with everything taking place in full view of the world, that thousands upon thousands of Adventists have come to unquestioningly accept, within their own church, those who take the roles of Catholic priests, bishops, and cardinals of papal Rome. These men have exalted their words to equality with God's words, and made their words a test, a standard by which all are to be accepted or rejected by the church. How is it that this has happened with seemingly no objectors? Can they not see? Can they not think? We answer, no, they cannot.

Says the Scripture:

"The simple [foolish] believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going." Proverbs 14:15.

We would now like to invite our readers into the classrooms from which the old have been instructed and to where the youth are now being instructed today. What do you see? Do you see student commendation for their asking of hard questions and objecting to their teacher's claims should those students disagree? Or, do you see students being trained to believe teachers at their word on pain of detention, suspension, and expulsion?

For decades, so-called education has consisted only in having students record information in their minds that they might spit it back out on a test. Students are not taught to think for themselves, but are told what they themselves are to think. They are not taught *how* to think, but *what* to think. They are not taught how to, "Think and do," but how to, "Believe and repeat." The questions to be addressed are: Who are these teachers to tell their students *what* to think? Who should decide what those students should think? Who should be allowed to determine who determines what those students should think? Who is going to decide who should be allowed to determine the person who determines what those students should think?

The grand principle off of which the whole reformation of the 15th and 16th centuries began, was the principle of "Sola Scriptura", meaning, the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone, solely, and only. Thus, should we be among those desiring a reformation, God's word alone should, not be forced, but allowed to determine what the students should think. But the questions remain: Who should decide for those students what the Scriptures say? Who should decide who decides for those students what the Scriptures say? And better, who should decide who the person is to decide who decides for those students what the Scriptures say? We hope the answer is becoming obvious. The student is to be taught and trained, not what to believe or

what to think, but that he, as an individual, with a mind of his own, is to go directly to God and His word alone, that God Himself might teach him of his faith and duty.

"The education that consists in the training of the memory, ***tending to discourage independent thought***, has a moral bearing which is too little appreciated. ***As the student sacrifices the power to reason and judge for himself, he becomes incapable of discriminating between truth and error, and falls an easy prey to deception. He is easily led to follow tradition and custom.***

"It is a fact widely ignored, though never without danger, that error rarely appears for what it really is. It is by mingling with or attaching itself to truth that it gains acceptance. The eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil caused the ruin of our first parents, and the acceptance of a mingling of good and evil is the ruin of men and women today. ***The mind that depends upon the judgment of others is certain, sooner or later, to be misled.***

"The power to discriminate between right and wrong we can possess only through individual dependence upon God. Each for himself is to learn from Him through His word. Our reasoning powers were given us for use, and God desires them to be exercised. "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18), He invites us. In reliance upon Him we may have wisdom to "refuse the evil, and choose the good." Isaiah 7:15; James 1:5. {Education, 230.3 -231.1}

Said our beloved brother John, after warning the brethren of the antichrist who sought to seduce them:

"The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ***ye need not that any man teach you***: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." 1 John 2:27.

The reason that seemingly no one has noted the previously mentioned corruption in the church, much less objected to it, is because they have been trained to receive and believe whatever they are taught, without questioning its authority or accuracy. Students are literally trained to be weak minded. Those who would exercise their God given ability to think on their own and speak their understanding of truth, are forced into submission, by lack of time or opportunity for independent thought, by threats and/or criticisms. This happens to the youth throughout their school years, it happens to them in church, in college, in the workplace, and everywhere they go. And once they reach the years of age, they are successfully silent and compliant, and most probably oblivious to any and all corruption. Why? It is because their minds were never exercised in a way that would develop them, thus they cannot discern truth from error, but can only be told what truth and error are. Without a human guide, they are well-nigh incapable of discerning anything, though they may insist otherwise.

Man has deformed men into nothing more than tape recorders, when the Most High had made them thinkers. Thus man has marred God's handiwork.

Said Ellen White:

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator-- individuality, **power to think** and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. ***It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation.*** Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. ***Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act,*** men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Education, 17.2}

In this sad state of the church and of the world, nearly all, with but comparatively few exceptions, have been taught, not to think, test, object, and reform, but to receive, believe, record, and replay. How then shall we expect a reformation without the education of our youth being conducted aright? What youth will continue to think independently when to do so is to make life harder on themselves?

Said Paul to the Thessalonians:

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

The children and youth of Seventh-Day Adventists are educated as if their only duty was to hold fast to everything that they are taught *because* it is good. Hardly ever are they taught to prove, to test, or to question *whether or not* it is good. Should an Adventist youth start questioning a doctrine of the church, would they not be quickly hushed and made to believe that it is a sin to doubt the supposed word of God as expressed in the interpretations of man? Indeed they would. Shame is unjustly placed upon on these children and youth. They are taught that they must reflect the thoughts of their parents and spiritual guardians, lest they be led to believe a lie. Is not this the very essence of the papacy's power? Of Catholicism at its core?

Parents, teachers, and pastors, do not tell your students what to think, train them how to think. Your unfounded fears are sinful in the eyes of Him who has bidden you, "Fear not." And this paralyzing sin of fear has led you, to whom has been given a weighty position of trust, to sin against those under your watch care. You have robbed them of the ability to think by silencing their every thoughtful expression that has not been in full harmony with yours. Thus you have educated weaklings, hindered their mental development—*which you should have encouraged*—and thus failed of that which it was your duty to do.

Children, youth, and students, do not hold it against those who have thus hindered your mental development. While they may have been in err, knowingly or unknowingly, it is yet still possible for you to develop your mental faculties. Do not fear to question the established doctrines and teachings of the church or any position held by those over you. Those who would

hinder you from doing so, *allow them not*. You may go directly to God and His word for truth (for they are nothing to be afraid of), just as Martin Luther and other of the great men of the past have; and you need not go through any fallible mortal who takes the form of a pope, priest, or prelate which you can only hope will not give you false information. Do know, dear youth, that you will be opposed for doing this, yet so was the Saviour.

Said Ellen White concerning the Child Jesus:

"In every gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact. Because He was so gentle and unobtrusive, the scribes and elders supposed that He would be easily influenced by their teaching. ***They urged Him to receive the maxims and traditions that had been handed down from the ancient rabbis, but He asked for their authority in Holy Writ. He would hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; but He could not obey the inventions of men.*** Jesus seemed to know the Scriptures from beginning to end, and He presented them in their true import. ***The rabbis were ashamed to be instructed by a child. They claimed that it was their office to explain the Scriptures, and that it was His place to accept their interpretation. They were indignant that He should stand in opposition to their word.***

"They knew that no authority could be found in Scripture for their traditions. They realized that in spiritual understanding Jesus was far in advance of them. Yet they were angry because He did not obey their dictates. ***Failing to convince Him, they sought Joseph and Mary, and set before them His course of noncompliance. Thus He suffered rebuke and censure.***" {The Desire of Ages, 85.1, 2}

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we must repent of our blindness and error. From childhood we were taught respect of persons in the classroom, Sabbath school room, and in the church social. It therefore became only normal for another man to interpret God's word to us and to make that interpretation of God's word equal to God's word itself. Men in positions of trust in the Adventist church have made themselves like unto the popes of the Roman Catholic Church, perhaps scarcely aware of what they have done, being that they have gone through the same process as we did. And how are we now educating ourselves and our children?

Are we educating the youth to be thinkers, or mere reflectors of other men's thoughts? Are we training them to seek the Holy Spirit alone to guide them into all truth? Or, are we training them to believe and do everything that man tells them without questioning, effectually silencing and destroying every expression of free thought, making them "incapable" of discerning truth from error?

Said Ellen White:

Any man, be he minister or layman, who seeks to compel or control the reason of any other man, becomes an agent of Satan, to do his work, and in the sight of the heavenly universe he bears the mark of Cain. {Bible Commentary, Volume 1, 1087.3}

It is the beast power of Revelation that requires blind, unquestioning obedience. Shall we prepare our children to receive the mark of the beast and thus receive it ourselves? "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity." (Revelation 13:10.)

We have set before us reformation and deformation. Which shall we choose? To decide is to go one way, or the other. To not decide is to decide to remain in this same, miserable state. Either choice has eternal consequences, both for us, for our children, and for our children's children. We will be held responsible for our decision.

We end with the words of the Adventist prophetess:

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammeled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.'

Romans 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity." {The Desire of Ages, 550.6}

"The foundation of Christianity is Christ our righteousness. *Men are individually accountable to God, and each must act as God moves upon him, not as he is moved by the mind of another; for if this manner of labor is pursued, souls cannot be impressed and directed by the Spirit of the great I am. They will be kept under a restraint which allows no freedom of action or of choice.*" {Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, 725.2}

Chapter 10

#8: Degrees and Honors

In the previous 7 articles, we looked into those principles which lead to reformation and we saw how that it is through failure to follow these principles that the church remains in such a dreadful state. In this article, we would like to examine the use of degrees and honors, which touch base with those very principles that gave papal Rome her power and great success.

In the last article, we saw that men are educated, not to think and do, but to believe and repeat. So then, this being the case, what do the educational degrees and honors that they have received represent? Do they represent the ability of the individual to think and to do, or to believe and repeat? Surely it must be the latter. And how are those who hold these degrees considered by the general public? Are they not considered well educated and far in advance of those who have them not? They are indeed.

Now switching this to the world of God's word, these honor holding students have been successfully programmed to believe and repeat what they were told that God's word says. Now, who told them what God's word says? And who told the person who told them what God's word says? Where does all this originate? Anyone who looks at the situation unbiased would have to conclude that it originated with some man's interpretation of God's word. And so man's interpretation of God's word has been handed down, generation to generation, as if it were the voice of God and worthy to be regarded as such.

We would now like to delve deeper into a question just asked, how are those who hold degrees considered by the general public? It needs no verification to say that those who hold degrees are more respected by men than those who hold them not. But is not this respect of persons which our brother James declares as sin? (See, James 2:9.) Indeed it is. What is so ironic about it is that we respect these people as being higher and more intelligent and studied than others, and come to respect their interpretations and opinions as equal to the word of God, yet these are often the very men who have never learned how to think and thus have very limited mental capacities. Again, who is behind all of the teachings which these men have recorded and replayed? How do we know they were right?

By those who understand these concepts, it is, with great unanimity, presented that in order to be heard and noticed of men, that it is wise to obtain degrees that men consider worthy of attention, and that by this means men might be led to hear us speak concerning the word of God. But this is not following the example of the Saviour.

Said Ellen White:

"The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. **As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek**

the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor.” {The Desire of Ages, 70.1}

“The King of glory stooped low to take humanity. Rude and forbidding were His earthly surroundings. His glory was veiled, that the majesty of His outward form might not become an object of attraction. He shunned all outward display. Riches, worldly honor, and human greatness can never save a soul from death; Jesus purposed that no attraction of an earthly nature should call men to His side. Only the beauty of heavenly truth must draw those who would follow Him. The character of the Messiah had long been foretold in prophecy, and He desired men to accept Him upon the testimony of the word of God.”

{The Desire of Ages, 43.1}

And what says the Scripture:

“I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.” Psalm 119:99.

The Psalmist said that he had more understanding than all his teachers. Why? *Because he meditated in the testimonies of God.* Why then, should we spend our God given time and money, to obtain that which is only a means of outward display and attraction, at the cost of failure to meditate as much as we could in the testimonies of God? Do we wish others to be attracted to the truth because of its beauty, or do we wish to get their attention by the principle of respect of persons, by flashing them our degree? Is not this encouraging sin? Why not instead teach them the truth that they should not be respecters of persons and drive it home to them that all men are our equals? Would they not then perhaps listen to what you would say to them concerning the truths of God? And, should you do it the other way and get a degree instead, will they not be led to listen to those who have higher levels of degrees than yours?

Says Ellen White:

“With the people of that age the value of all things was determined by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life's great essentials. Born amidst surroundings the rudest, sharing a peasant's home, a peasant's fare, a craftsman's occupation, living a life of obscurity, identifying Himself with the world's unknown toilers,--amidst these conditions and surroundings,--Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life--God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart.” {Education, 77.2}

Making man's words equal to God's words, training men to believe and repeat instead of to think and to do, and then honoring these men for doing such, which essentially is respect of persons, are the foundational pillars of that which effectually brings to a halt all efforts of reform. Reformation demands the destruction of this system, if nowhere else, at least in the minds of individuals. But reformation will not take place while we are encouraging and supporting that beastly tyrant which is hindering all revival and reformation. So what are we going to do about it? Sit back and let Satan win, or follow bravely behind the Captain of the Lord's host? The choice is yours.

Chapter 11

#9: *Man Vs. God: Guess who wins?*

In the past 8 articles, it has been clearly outlined that there is a war going on between man's word and God's word, between man's requirements and God's requirements. In this article, however, we desire to look into why all of what has previously been said actually matters to me, to you, and to everyone else.

The question is asked, "What must I do to be saved?" The Catholics have their answer, the Protestant churches have a different answer, and Adventists of course have still another answer. How do you know who is right? Having been around Adventists, we have observed that they will tell you that they know that they are right because the Bible supports their position and no one else's. What is fascinating is that if you ask someone from any Protestant church how they know that their position is right, they will tell you that they are sure they are right because the Bible supports their position. Also, Catholics say that they know that their position is correct because the Bible supports their position and no one else's. And guess what! All of them will show you directly from the word of God the very Scriptures which they say proves that their position is correct. Who is right? All have the Bible, all claim to be right, and all of them have made man's interpretation of God's word equal to God's word itself.

And what about you? How do you know that your position is correct? Is it correct? While it certainly cannot apply to all, it definitely applies to most, to say that the majority of people do not read, much less study their Bibles. Have you studied your Bible? Not read, but have you actually sat down, with a humble spirit, knowing how *extremely easy* it is to twist the Scriptures to make them say whatever you want, and diligently studied the Scriptures with a prayerful, dependent spirit, to understand exactly what God is saying? Sad to say, few, very few, have actually ever done this; few even know what it means to do this.

So then, how do you know that your understanding of what you must do to be saved is correct? It is not enough to quote Bible verses which support your view of the matter, for all Christian religions can do this, so the fact that you can quote a verse doesn't mean a thing.

We here address an important point. It appears that most Adventists are very strongly opposed to thoroughly investigating the claims of their beliefs. For example, many Adventists hold Ellen White as a prophetess, yet they've never gone to an anti-Ellen White website to research a different view on the matter. They say that to do this would be dangerous and result in losing one's faith. Not so. If we study with an honest desire to know what truth is, that we might live up to any new light that we can find, Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth. If we are in error, praise the Lord that we will be corrected! If we are correct in our views, thorough investigation will only make it more evident.

Failure to study and research things out thoroughly, being willing and actually considering the claims of different viewpoints, inevitably results in us basing our faith off of personal ignorance. How can we call it an "intelligent faith," that bases its foundation off of a one-sided, biased view of things? How can one safely base their faith off of only that information that they

want to believe, while refusing to view anything outside of this? Is not this why virtually all religions are left in darkness? Let none of us base our faith off of biased, personal ignorance.

We quote Ellen White:

"Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly.... There are those who oppose everything that is not in accordance with their own ideas, and by so doing they endanger their eternal interest as verily as did the Jewish nation in their rejection of Christ." {Review and Herald, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

The point in view: Sadly, the reason that most of us hold to the views that we do concerning what we must do to be saved, is only because these are what we were taught, either as children, youth, or as adults, and that to consider anything else results in doubting God and losing one's salvation. Viewing our lives from childhood until we became of age, here is how the process worked.

As children, we were shown a Bible verse, were given an explanation as to what it means, and then came to view that explanation as the pure truth of God. *This right here* is what we call making the words of the interpretation of man equal in truth and authority to the words of God. *This same thing* happened to us at all ages and in all places; from two feet tall, to six feet and four inches. At home, at school, at church, and abroad, we were taught the same thing by our parents, our teachers, our pastors, and so on. And we came to view their interpretations of God's word as being equal in truth and authority to the word of God itself. And why should we not have believed them? Their explanations made sense didn't they? Their interpretations all seemed to harmonize did they not? And yet, despite all this, they are still, regardless of accuracy, nothing more, and nothing less, than man's interpretation of God's word. And we have taken these interpretations given to us as children, read the Bible in the light of these interpretations, and have never challenged those interpretations or considered that some other position might be correct. And when we have read a verse in the Bible that seemed to challenge our view, we either ignored that verse calling it "not clear enough", or, we studied to prove why that verse is somehow null and void. For some of course, this did not happen from childhood, but the process was still the same.

Now, the question of questions: In accepting man's interpretation of God's word as equal to God's word itself, have you, on a personal level, made your salvation dependent upon the accuracy of the interpretation that was given to you? Have you really gone deep enough?

Said Ellen White:

"Do you ask, What shall I do to be saved? You must lay your preconceived opinions, your hereditary and cultivated ideas, at the door of investigation. If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in

order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God's word.” {Christ’s Object Lessons, 112.3}

“We are not safe if we neglect to search the Scriptures daily for light and knowledge. Earthly blessings cannot be obtained without toil, and can we expect that spiritual and heavenly blessings will come without earnest effort on our part? The mines of truth are to be worked. Says the psalmist, ‘The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.’ ***The word of God must not be kept apart from our life. It must be entertained in the mind, welcomed in the heart, and be cherished, loved, and obeyed. We need also much more knowledge; we need to be enlightened in regard to the plan of salvation. There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare. When light begins to shine forth to make clear the plan of redemption to the people, the enemy works with all diligence that the light may be shut away from the hearts of men. If we come to the word of God with a teachable, humble spirit, the rubbish of error will be swept away, and gems of truth, long hidden from our eyes, will be discovered.***” {The Review Herald, September 3, 1889 par. 11}

So, at least according to the Adventist prophetess, less than 1% of the people of her time actually understood for themselves that which was so vital to their salvation. And could this be so unbelievable for the condition of the Christian world today, *for the Adventist world today*, when scarcely anyone actually studies their Bibles? They *might* know the truth concerning salvation, *and they might not*. But to know something for oneself is of an entirely different character.

Now, let us consider a likely case: A Christian man goes through his life having the *correct* understanding of what he must do to be saved, but doesn’t know it for himself from the Bible alone. Satan comes along, at a moment of temptation, perhaps at a life and death situation, and challenges the man to give an answer for how he knows that his understanding of what he must do to be saved is correct. The man answers Satan only with, “Because the Bible says so.” Then Satan asks the simple, yet deathly question, “Do you know that for yourself, or did you accept another man’s interpretation of the Bible? You’re not basing your salvation off of a man’s interpretation are you? Did you consider other views, or are you basing your faith and salvation off of personal ignorance?”

Is this not what we are doing? Is this not the very path we are going down? For the great majority of us, we have made our salvation *100% dependent* upon the accuracy of the interpretation given to us from man. Thus, we are depending upon man for our salvation and not on God. How so? Because our salvation is *hinging* on whether or not the interpretation of God’s word that was given to us is accurate. Yes, we are of course trusting to the sacrifice of Christ for our salvation, for without that, man’s interpretation would not matter. However, we are still depending partially on man for our salvation, because we are depending upon man’s interpretation of God’s word to tell us how the sacrifice of Jesus is to be *applied* to our souls.

Now, if we want our salvation to be dependent upon God and God only and not on man at all, then we need to start studying the Scriptures for ourselves, going deeply, and trusting that the Holy Spirit alone will ‘guide us into all truth.’

Says the Scriptures:

"Howbeit when he, ***the Spirit of truth***, is come, ***he will guide you into all truth***: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." John 16:13.

"But the Comforter, which is ***the Holy Ghost***, whom the Father will send in my name, ***he shall teach you all things***, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14:26.

"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and **ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things**, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." 1 John 2:27.

These Scriptures effectually flatten, with wonderful flatness, any and all need for a human interpreter. We need no middle man to mark out for us the way of salvation. The word of God itself may be understood by us *directly*, with no need for a man to tell us what God means. And do not the Scriptures themselves warn us, with great emphasis, to beware of false teachers? And to make this short and simple, how do you determine a true teacher from a false one? The *only* way that anyone can determine whether or not a teacher is teaching truth, is to test him *ourselves* by the word of God. And this cannot possibly be accomplished without us being thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures *ourselves*. Have you been trusting to man's interpretation of God's word instead of depending upon the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth?

"Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide": keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. **Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me."** Micah 7:5-7.

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." Psalm 146:3.

"Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD." Jeremiah 17:5.

The principle of Sola Scriptura, the Scriptures and the Scriptures only, lay at the very foundation of the great reformation of the Dark Ages. Having a middle man as an interpreter who comes between us and God, is not, nor will it ever be, Sola Scriptura, for this is the Scriptures and the Scriptures *with man's interpretation*. And this is the very essence of the papacy. Call yourself Protestant, call yourself Adventist, but because you have accepted a middle man, an interpreter, and have not stuck to Sola Scriptura, you are Roman Catholic.

So what are you going to do about it? Are you going to diligently study unbiasedly with a humble, trusting spirit, relying upon God to teach you what truth is, and effectually remove all middle men? Or are you going to remain just where you are, set your stakes, base your faith on personal ignorance, and refuse to lift a finger towards reformation?

We repeat the following italicized thought only because its contrary part appears to be so religiously enforced. *Failure to question and examine things thoroughly for oneself is to base one's faith on personal ignorance, not on a studied knowledge and researched conclusion of anything. This is extremely dangerous and a violation of our first and highest duty before God.*

"It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God." {The Great Controversy, 598.2}

Chapter 12

#10: A Church Manual?

We would like to briefly summarize the previous nine articles for the sake of refresher.

Article:

#1: Shows how man's interpretation of God's word becomes exalted in truth and authority to God's word itself by saying that if one rejects the interpretation of man, as is manifested in the established beliefs, that he is rejecting the Bible itself and is therefore worthy of disfellowship.

#2: Covered the original position of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in 1872 concerning the fundamental beliefs which is essentially summarized in their position itself—"We wish to have it distinctly understood that *we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible*. We do not put forth this as having *any authority* with our people, nor is it designed to secure *uniformity* among them."

#3: Studied into Adventist Pioneer J.N. Loughborough's *The 5 Steps of Apostasy* and showed how the SDA Church has taken the first four of them according to their official 2010 Church Manual which plainly states that if you don't not accept the Bible *as interpreted by the SDA Church* that you are withheld from church membership either by non-admittance or disfellowship; thus making man's interpretation of God's word the rule and standard by which all are to be measured and judged.

#4: Compared the original position of the SDA Church in 1872 concerning the Fundamental Beliefs with the haphazard, papal-like position of the SDA Church in 2010.

#5: Revealed the great sin of the SDA Church in making the preaching of Christ secondary in focusing, by church Manual requirement, on those doctrines which, while they may be important, are not essential to man's salvation, thus failing to follow the example of Paul.

#6: Examined the words of Jesus which forbade ascribing titles to our fellow men and showed how this is a sin of respect of persons which breaks down the barriers against exalting man's interpretations of God's words to an equality with God's words, thus establishing a papal hierarchy.

#7: Explained how students are taught, not to think and to do, but to believe and repeat, thus discouraging the independent thought resulting in the lack of ability to test and see if those in positions of trust are teaching truth, therefore determining them an easy prey to deception and creating an atmosphere conducive to a papal hierarchy which demands consent to all of their teachings as though they were the word of God.

#8: Looked into the use of degrees and honors which encourages the sin of respect of persons thus fostering a form of papal hierarchy.

#9: Pointed out how we are the subjects, not of the word of God, but of the interpretations of man concerning God's word, thus showing how we are basing our salvation off of the accuracy of the interpretation that was given to us, and/or personal ignorance, instead of depending upon the Holy Spirit of promise to guide us into all truth.

To sum this up: The sin of respect of persons is encouraged in the church by the ascribing of titles to those in positions of trust and by the giving of degrees and honors. One coming up in such a setting as this comes to view this as a good and normal state of things. This state of things leads men, who have the titles, degrees, and honors, to exalt their words to equality with the words of God. They get away with doing this because those who don't have those titles, degrees, and honors, have come to view them as rightfully deserving of such authority and power. They make no objections to such apostasy, because the education that they received trained them only to believe and repeat and not how to think, to perceive, and to act, thus they are incapable of even seeing that there is a problem, much less doing anything about it. Those in papal positions in the church have thus been given free liberty to create a church Manual which requires missionaries to preoccupy their time teaching nonessentials instead of the gospel. These nonessentials must be taught because the papal hierarchy has made them the test and rule of faith for the church. Thus the Seventh-Day Adventist Church has officially taken step #4 in the list of apostasy outlined by brother J.N. Loughborough, and anyone who seeks to oppose the papal hierarchy of the church is officially threatened with excommunication.

Having gone over the review, we would now like to deliver the last blow to the destruction of the papal hierarchy of the SDA Church. First, we would like to review the original position of the SDA church concerning their Fundamental Beliefs:

“In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we **wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them**, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject, and sometimes to correct false statements circulated against us, and to remove erroneous impressions which have obtained with those who have not had an opportunity to become acquainted with our faith and practice. Our only object is to meet this necessity.”
{Fundamental Principles, 1872, 3.1}

The pioneers of our church had no rule of “discipline” by which its members were to be disciplined. The Fundamental Beliefs had no “authority” with the church or its members. To have writings, or a book, aside from the Bible, to be a rule, a guide, or a judge, which all are to follow and obey, is not the principle of the Bible and the Bible only (“Sola Scriptura”). Instead, it is the word of man *and the word of man only*. The official 2010 Church Manual of the SDA Church is a book of manmade rules, which marks out just what men are to believe and to do,

and marks out a course by which even the Almighty must follow, and all the while our beloved Saviour says, "*In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*" Matthew 15:9.

Thus the words of Jesus effectually destroy, as with a blast, the papal hierarchy of the SDA Church. We close with the words of Paul, which we hope will be carefully studied in relation to the SDA Church Manual:

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

Colossians 2:20-22.

Chapter 13

#11: *Sola Fide – Finalizing the Separation*

Having effectually destroyed all established theories and doctrines in the past 10 articles by revealing the true definition of “Sola Scriptura,” that being, the Scriptures and the Scriptures only, *and never as interpreted by this church or that man*, we would now like to introduce that other key principle of the great reformation of the Dark Ages which went hand in hand with “Sola Scriptura,” the great principle of “Sola Fide.”

“Sola Scriptura” means, the Scriptures and the Scriptures only; “Sola Fide” means, by faith and faith only. Now before proceeding any further, we would like it to be distinctly understood that when we talk about “Sola Fide” in all following text, that we only use the term for what it means of itself, separate from any doctrine or belief that may or may not have been attached to it. When we use the term “Sola Fide,” we wish it to mean nothing more or less than what it means of itself, simply, by faith and faith only.

It is neither our desire nor purpose to cover the history of “Sola Fide” and the many doctrines that have been attached to it, except to say that it effectually tore from the iron grasp of the papacy, their grip over the minds and consciences of men. No longer were men bound to the church to have the merits of Christ’s sacrifice applied to them, for they recognized that through faith alone in Jesus Christ, that they could receive forgiveness and pardon, and partake of that salvation so freely accessible to all who would take and drink from the fountain of the water of life.

Why was this so important to the great reformation of the Dark Ages? It is because those who desired to follow the principle of “Sola Scriptura” were threatened with excommunication. If the only way that the merits of the sacrifice of Christ could be applied to them was through their connection with the church, then few would have undertaken the principle of “Sola Scriptura” for fear of losing their salvation. The cost of studying for oneself in those days was, as was presented to them, to lose their own soul. And “what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26.) The same principle holds true today. If men look to their church as a necessary part of their salvation, they will never dare do that which would threaten their separation from it. They would sooner trust their faith to the clergy, to base their faith on personal ignorance, than to risk their hope of eternal life.

And how is it in the Adventist world? We read a very famous quote from their prophetess, Ellen White:

“Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. ***The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out--the chaff separated from the precious wheat.*** This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place.” {Manuscript Releases, Volume 12, 324.3}

From this statement it is plain that the church will go through to the end. But the question is, What is the church? Adventists in general, yet not officially, here interpret the word “church”

to mean the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Is this an accurate interpretation? In Mrs. White writings, the word "church," generally refers to the people of God in all ages.* Has God's true church ever fallen? Or were those who were unfaithful left with the denominational name and church buildings, while the faithful, the true church of God, have come out from among them?

Now while term church is used to represent the people of God in all ages, in the final age of the church there will be a separation of the wheat from the tares. When this final separation takes place, who will the church be? The faithful, or the unfaithful? Who then will be worthy of the title of "God's church"? Which of these will be the church that will go through?

Adventists are generally taught that the SDA Church will go through to the end. If any Adventist wants to go through to the end with their church, and not "fall" as the statement says, then they would of course need to hold on dearly to the church and do nothing that would sever them from it, or in any way threaten separation from it. Therefore, in order to be saved at last, they better find in the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White exactly what they are told to see and believe, for if they end up seeing and believing something contrary to the Church's established beliefs, they are threatened with disfellowshipment from what they have been led to believe, is not merely the church that will go through to the end, but that will make it into heaven itself. Very papal indeed.

The Scripture says:

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8:31-34.

Here Jesus makes it plain that we when know the truth, it sets us free. Free from what? The Jews of course responded stating that they were the children of Abraham and were never in bondage to men. They then inquired, "How sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" And in Jesus' response, He made it clear beyond question that through the knowledge of truth they would be free, not from literal bondage, but from committing and thus serving sin.

Based on these Scriptures, we would irrefractorily like to propose that anyone who commits sin, regardless of race or religion, age or rank, position or honor, *does not know the truth*. Jesus said with definiteness that when we know the truth, it sets us free from committing sin. On this ground, it is evident that anyone who commits sin does not (mark the words: *does not*), and we repeat, *does not* know the truth. Now, in light of this, does the Seventh-Day Adventist Church know the truth? We leave it with the reader to decide.

In the following article, we would like to present to the reader an exposition on how he might obtain the righteousness of Christ, which we propose, will not only give men forgiveness of past sins through faith alone, but that which will, by faith alone, set men free from committing sin at present. However, we emphatically reject and object to any effort which would establish this teaching as a belief which men must hold, either on a church or personal level. Anyone who would come to accept and believe this teaching, is not to construe any phraseology expressing that teaching, which phraseology men are in the least required to

receive. "Sola Scriptura" is the basis of all Christian reforms, and we would not have anyone remove this principle under the claim of its sister, "Sola Fide."

The teaching of Righteousness by Faith here to be presented is to be accepted upon its own merits, should the reader see that it has any. We would have no one connect this message to any Adventist or non-Adventist of the past or present. To study any doctrine or portion of the Scriptures, in the light of the writings of other men *only*, is coming short of studying the Scriptures in the light of themselves. All such studying that is done, which seeks to understand the Scriptures in the light of other mortals' interpretations only, saving for the writings of the prophets, is not, nor will it ever be, a safe way of studying the Scriptures. Man is not infallible, *but fallible*, and while their writings should perhaps be considered, in the case that the Lord has spoken through them, that study which ends its search here, resting satisfied, is just as much papal in nature as that of the Catholics, for so do they the same.

We end with the following quote of Ellen White:

"Those who allow prejudice to bar the mind against the reception of truth cannot receive the divine enlightenment. Yet, ***when a view of Scripture is presented, many do not ask, Is it True,—in harmony with God's word? but, By whom is it advocated? and unless it comes through the very channel that pleases them, they do not accept it.*** So thoroughly satisfied are they with their own ideas, that they will not examine the Scripture evidence, with a desire to learn, but refuse to be interested, merely because of their prejudices.

"The Lord often works where we least expect him; he surprises us by revealing his power through instruments of his own choice, while he passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits,—because it is truth.

"The Bible must not be interpreted to suit the ideas of men, however long they may have held these ideas to be true. ***We are not to accept the opinion of commentators as the voice of God; they were erring mortals like ourselves. God has given reasoning powers to us as well as to them. We should make the Bible its own expositor.***" {Gospel Workers, 1892 Edition, 125.3-126.2}

* This statement is made based off of lots of personal research. To do your own, we recommend that you access your Ellen White CD Rom and do a topical search on the word "church."

Chapter 14

#12: *Salvation In A Sentence*

I'm writing this article because I personally see a great need to explain exactly what we must do to be saved. This truth is the one thing that Satan will do anything to make sure that people do not understand. I will now do my best to put in the simplest form what we must do to be set free from Satan's power, from self, and from sinning.

First off, do know that it is difficult to get the reader to understand exactly what I am trying to communicate by writing this up in a document versus telling it to the reader in person, because I cannot clarify things as well as I could if I were personally talking to them, but God willing, it will suffice.

This will not be an exhaustive study that answers all objections and piles up evidence upon heaping evidence to validate every point that it makes. The point of this study is to present the way of salvation in as simple a language and manner as possible, making all of the necessary clarifications without getting off course. Those who have questions or objections, or feel a need for greater supporting evidence, feel free to ask and/or request after you have completed this study.

Please read the following paragraphs of Ellen White carefully as I quote them. Then, when I give a summary of a quote from her, please make sure you see exactly where in her quoted works that I am getting my point from.

There is a paragraph in the Spirit of Prophecy that explains exactly what one must do to be set free from sin. Let us read the last part of that paragraph.

Statement #1:

"What you need to understand is the true force of ***the will***. This is the governing power in the nature of man, ***the power of decision***, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. ***You can give Him your will***; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. ***Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ***; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him." {Steps to Christ, 47.1}

What this statement says:

- 1) Will = Power (ability) to decide
 - a) It is important to note that the will is *not* the choice, it is *not* the decision, but is the *power*, or *ability* to decide.

1. “***The will is*** the governing power in the nature of man, ***the power of decision***, or choice.” {Education, pg. 289.1}
- 2) You cannot change your heart.
- 3) You can give God your ability to decide; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure.
- 4) Upon giving God your ability to decide, your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ.
 - a) It is important to note that our whole nature will be brought, not merely the *authority* of the Spirit, but under the *control* of the Spirit.

What this statement means:

- 1) If we give God, *not our choice or decision*, but our *ability to decide*, He will work in us to do His will, and our whole nature will be brought under the *control* of the Spirit of Christ.

Statement #2:

“***The whole being is to be under God's control.*** We must not think that we can take supervision of our own thoughts. They must be brought into captivity to Christ. ***Self cannot manage self;*** it is not sufficient for the work. Whoever tries to do this will be worsted. ***God alone can make and keep us loyal.***” {Review and Herald, September 14, 1897 par. 14}

What this statement says:

- 1) Our whole being is to be under God's control.
 - a) It is important to note that our whole being is to be, not merely under the *authority* of God, but under the *control* of God.
- 2) Self cannot manage itself.
- 3) Whoever tries to manage (control) themselves will be worsted.
- 4) God alone can make and keep us loyal.

What this statement means:

- 1) If our whole being is not under God's control, but instead we are managing (controlling) ourselves, we will be ruined because God alone can make and keep us loyal.

Statement #3:

"The passions are to be controlled by ***the will, which is itself to be under the control of God.***" {Ministry of Healing, 130.2}

What this statement says:

- 1) Our passions are to be controlled by our ability to decide (will).
- 2) The ability to decide, is itself to be under the control of God.
 - a) It is important to notice that our ability to decide is not merely to be under the *authority* of God, but under the *control* of God.

Statement #4:

"Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. ***They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us.*** Through the Spirit God works in His people 'to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Philippians 2:13. But ***many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift.***" {Desire of Ages, 672.1}

What this statement says:

- 1) Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to us.
- 2) Many profess to claim this promise, but receive no benefit.
- 3) They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by divine agencies.
- 4) We cannot use the Spirit.
- 5) The Spirit is to use us.
- 6) Many do not submit to be used by the Holy Spirit, because they want to manage (control) themselves.
- 7) This is why they do not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What this statement means:

- 1) If we do not give God our ability to decide (will) so that the divine agency of the Holy Spirit can control (use/manage) us, but instead want to control ourselves, then we will not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Statement #5:

"The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. ***Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead***, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power." {Desire of Ages, 671.2}

What this statement says:

- 1) Sin can be resisted and overcome only through the Holy Spirit.

Back to Statement #1:

Please read the following paragraph carefully:

"Many are inquiring, '***How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?***' You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. ***You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections.*** The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the ***will***. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the ***power of decision***, or of choice. ***Everything*** depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. ***You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections;*** but you can choose to serve Him. **You can give Him your will;** He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. ***Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ;*** your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him."

{Steps to Christ, 47.1}

What all of these statements mean:

- 1) Our will is our ability to decide.
- 2) In order for sin to be resisted in our lives by means of the Holy Spirit, we must give to God, not our choice, but our ability to decide so that He can be in control of it.
- 3) Once God is in control of our whole being, especially our ability to decide, He will make and keep us loyal. If we will not give to God our ability to decide, we will be ruined, for God alone can make and keep us loyal.

Clarification:

When you give God your ability to decide, it is evident that you want God to control you. It is evident that God is not controlling you against your decision, but according to your decision. If you don't want Him to control you anymore, God will give you back your ability to decide and will leave you to try to manage it yourself.

My Conclusion of This All:

- 1) If you want to be surrendered to God
- 2) If you want to obey God
- 3) If you need to overcome temptation
 - a) Then give God your ability to decide (just let it go into His control and *stop trying to control it yourself*)
 - b) He will then literally be in control of making your decisions for you because He is in control of your ability to decide (your will).
 1. So long as you *continually* do this, you will find that God will always make the decision that you understand is right. God makes no mistakes when He is in control.
 - a. This act of giving to God your ability to decide is the act of saving faith, for it allows God to control you to do everything in accordance with His will.
 - b. "Faith, **saving faith**, is to be taught. The definition of this faith in Jesus Christ may be described in few words: ***It is the act of the soul by which the whole man is given over to the guardianship and control of Jesus Christ.*** He abides in Christ and Christ abides in the soul by faith as supreme. ***The believer commits his soul and body to God, and with assurance may say, Christ is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. All who will do this will be saved unto life eternal.*** There will be an assurance that the soul is washed in the blood of Christ and clothed with His righteousness and precious in the sight of Jesus. Our thoughts and our hopes are on the second advent of our Lord. That is the day when the Judge of all the earth will reward the **trust** of His people. {The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, 495.3}

One Sentence Version:

Continually give God your ability to decide. (This will solve all of your problems.)

Warning:

Make sure not to depend upon your ability to give God your ability to decide. Depend *only* upon His ability to make all of the right choices in you, for you, through you. If you depend in the least upon what you can or will do, it results in self-righteousness which is sin.

Ellen White's Closing:

"I have thought of the request of Sister T many times since. She said, 'Oh, I want that precious faith that seems so positively necessary for me. Do send me something simple that my mind can grasp, that I can take hold of this faith to believe Jesus is a present help in every time of need.' We find this is the great want of the soul--something that the needy, longing soul can grasp, something easy to be understood. ***The great reason why many do not lay hold of this truth is that it is so easy. They think they must do some great thing, and that God expects them to go through some wonderful process in order to be converted, but when we present the truth as it is, in its beautiful simplicity, they stand amazed. 'Is that all?' they inquire.***

"We need to make the way of life just as clear as it is in Jesus, that all may see the Way, the Truth, and the Life. ***Simply to take God at His word seems so easy they hardly dare accept it.***" {Manuscript Releases, Vol. 10, 195.2, 3}

Extra:

"Christ is to live in His human agents and work through their faculties and act through their capabilities." {Mount of Blessings, 94.1}

"You need to drink daily at the fountain of truth, that you may understand the secret of pleasure and joy in the Lord. But you must remember that your will is the spring of all your actions. ***This will, that forms so important a factor in the character of man, was at the Fall given into the control of Satan; and he has ever since been working in man to will and to do of his own pleasure,*** but to the utter ruin and misery of man. ***But the infinite sacrifice of God in giving Jesus, His beloved Son, to become a sacrifice for sin, enables Him to say, without violating one principle of His government: 'Yield yourself up to Me; give Me that will; take it from the control of Satan, and I will take possession of it; then I can work in you to will and to do of My good pleasure.'*** When He gives you the mind of Christ, your will becomes as His will, and your character is transformed to be like Christ's character."

{Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, 515.1}

Chapter 15

Answers to Objections (Part 1)

The following answers objections made against the claims of The Final Reformation article series written by James Prest.

Objection #1 – “2 Thessalonians 2:15 makes it evident that the apostolic church had Fundamental Beliefs.”

Let us read the verse:

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

“Therefore”? Wherefore “therefore”? The word “therefore” makes it clear that those addressed who were to follow the preceding advice of the rest of the verse, were to follow that instruction because of a previously listed reason. What was this reason? We read the preceding verses:

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4-25.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, informing them that Christ would not come again “except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

Now, as it is Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA’s) that are the ones bringing forth the objections, there is no need to prove that this “man of sin” is referring to the pope or the papal power. It was in view of the fact that those of this papal power “received not the love of the truth,” thus resulting in damnation, that the apostle Paul admonished the Thessalonians saying, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

Now as for the traditions here mentioned, we would like to inquire concerning them. How were the Thessalonians taught these traditions? Paul answers in that very verse, “by word, or our epistle.” The Thessalonians were taught said traditions by word and/or epistle. To be fair, we would like to point out that it cannot be proven either way that the “word” here mentioned is the word of God, and equally so, neither can it be proven that the word “epistle” is referring to inspired epistles as were the writings of Paul.

However, seeing that Jesus spoke against “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,” (Matthew 15:9) we propose that since we do not believe the words of Jesus and Paul to be antagonistic towards each other, but rather in perfect harmony, that the “traditions” which the Thessalonians were taught, were taught to them straight from the inspired words of God, whether from the Old Testament writings, or from the New Testament writings which mostly came in the form of epistles (See 2 Peter 3:15, 16). Thus it is obvious to us that the traditions here mentioned were not a form of Fundamental Beliefs containing the phraseology of men, but rather that came directly from the Holy Scriptures, in the sense that *they were* the Holy Scriptures.

Therefore, our conclusion is that in light of the coming papal power, who was to make his words equal to God’s words, Paul admonished the Thessalonians to adhere strictly to the Scriptures and receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.

Objection #2 – “Acts 16:4 makes it evident that the apostolic church had Fundamental Beliefs.”

Let us read the verse:

“And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.” Acts 16:4.

In this verse, Paul and Timotheus delivered to the churches “decrees” which those churches were to keep. These decrees “were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.”

Now, what were these decrees? The answer to this can be found in the previous chapter. In Acts 15 we find that certain men “taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” (Acts 15:1.) Because of the contention over the matter, Paul and Barnabas were sent to “go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.” (Acts 15:2.) The apostles and elders heard the matter and decided to write to

the believers that they need not be circumcised in order to be saved, but rather that they did “necessary things”, which were, “Abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.” Acts 15:24-29.

The statement to the believers that they need not be circumcised to be saved, is more of a destroying of Fundamental Beliefs and/or creeds than it is a setting up of them, for what was happening at that time is that certain men were trying to establish a fundamental belief, for a belief that effects one’s salvation is fairly fundamental. And as for the “necessary things” listed that they were to keep, they were only things that were part of the law, the transgression of which is sin.

If a person is living in sin, Jesus makes it plain that after a persistent refusal on the part of the violator to cease from sin, that they are to be to the church as a “heathen man,” (Matthew 18:17) that being, no longer reckoned as part of God’s people. However, we see no place in Scripture where it is recorded that if a man has beliefs that are different from the body (or people in general), that he is to be refused acceptance into the church, or, already being a member in the church, that he is to be disfellowshiped from it.

Objection #3 – “2 John 1:9-11 makes it evident that the Fundamental Beliefs back in the apostles’ time were a test of fellowship, the denial of which would call for discipline and/or disfellowshipment from the church.”

Let us read the verse:

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” 2 John 1:9-11.

Notice that in these verses there is found no reference to the church, church membership, or reference to discipline or disfellowshipment. The verses instruct us saying that if anyone comes to us and doesn’t bring the doctrine of Christ, that we are not to let them into our house or bid them God speed. If we take this verse for what it says, it is saying that we are not allowed to be hospitable to anyone other than Christians (or Seventh-Day Adventists) by allowing them into our homes. Anyone coming to our home needing a place to stay for the night will just have to find somewhere else to sleep. This is not the doctrine of Jesus. Jesus was kind and hospitable to all, regardless of race, religion, rank, or creed.

The issue in this verse seems to be with supporting those who are involved in “evil deeds.” Supporting evil is an issue, but nowhere in these verses is anything mentioned concerning the church, church membership, or reference to discipline or disfellowshipment. Thus we claim that this verse holds no weight in favor of making the acceptance of man’s interpretation of God’s word a test of fellowship.

Objection #4 – “1 Timothy 1:3 makes it evident that the apostolic church had Fundamental Beliefs, for Timothy was sent to make sure only certain doctrine was taught.”

Let us read the verse:

“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” 1 Timothy 1:3.

If someone in the church was teaching what I viewed as false doctrine, I guarantee you that I would put forth effort to correct it. This book is a strong testimony to that. Yet does this mean that the church has a system of creed, or simply that I don't want people spreading what I believe is false doctrine? This objection holds fairly equal grounds with the one that says that the apostolic church taught doctrine. Well of course they did, but this does not mean that they had a creedal list of Fundamental Beliefs. It means only that they taught things. I teach things, but the only creed to which I subscribe is the Bible alone, no interpretations offered.

Objection #5 – “2 Peter 1:20 makes it evident that the Scriptures need to be interpreted by a group, not by any private individual.”

Let us read the verse:

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” 2 Peter 1:20.

This is simply to mean that no man or group of men can get together and independently and privately interpret the Scriptures for everyone else. This is exactly what Rome did, and what the SDA church claims to have the right to do.

Objection #6 – “9T 260.1 makes it evident that we should trust the judgment of the General Conference on matters of doctrine.”

Let us read the statement:

“I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed. But **when, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered.** Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body.” {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9, 260.1}

Notice the first part of this statement. “I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man.” This would actually support the claims brought against the SDA church in this book, saving that the context makes it evident that this has nothing to do with interpreting the Scriptures.

Now look at the last part of the second sentence. Here it is plan that this statement is not written regarding the right of the General Conference to interpret the Scriptures for the church, but only that when it comes to “what plans shall be followed” in carrying out the work of God, we are to leave *that* up to the decision of the General Conference.

Here is the next paragraph:

“At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the ***general management of the work*** have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out ***unwise plans and to restrict God's work***, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled ***to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work.***” {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9, 260.2}

As beautifully sounding as these statements are, from nowhere in them can we pull out the idea that the General Conference has the right to tell others what they are to believe. We quote again from Ellen White:

“Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction.” {Desire of Ages, 414.3}

Objection #7 – “If there is no set of beliefs, there will be chaos, and everyone will be questioning and believing different things.”

We read from Ellen White:

“Some have feared that if in even a single point they acknowledge themselves in error, other minds would be led to doubt the whole theory of truth. ***Therefore they have felt that investigation should not be permitted; that it would tend to dissension and disunion. But if such is to be the result of investigation, the sooner it comes the better. If there are those whose faith in God's word will not stand the test of an investigation of the Scriptures, the sooner they are revealed the better; for then the way will be opened to show them their error.*** We cannot hold that a position once taken, an idea once advocated, is not, under any circumstances, to be relinquished. There is but one who is infallible,—He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” {Gospel Workers, 1892 Edition, 125.2}

Thus Ellen White makes it fairly plain that it would be a good thing if people started questioning the Fundamental Beliefs. In fact, ‘the sooner the better’ she says. Regardless, it has

already been well substantiated that our only “set of beliefs” should be the Bible and the Bible only, with no human interpretations given in attempt to tell others what God means by what He says.

Objection #8 – “Disciplinary measures concerning the denial of the Fundamental Beliefs or teaching doctrines contrary to the same are not even enforced, so it doesn’t really matter.”

While it is easy to say that said disciplinary measures are not enforced in any Seventh-Day Adventist Church that one has seen, it is virtually impossible for anyone to say that these measures are not enforced in any Seventh-Day Adventist Church in the world. The only way to be able to intelligently make such claim would be for one to be personally acquainted with all cases of discipline throughout the world church.

Also, the Sunday Laws are not enforced either, but a lack of enforcement at present doesn’t make them anymore righteous, it doesn’t ensure anyone that they won’t be enforced in the future, nor does it make those who have made such laws any less guilty for making them. If we are in favor of the removal of the Sunday Laws, even though they aren’t yet enforced, then why wouldn’t we be against the removal of the Adventist creed laws, which also are not yet enforced?

Regardless of these things, pastors who do not discipline members for believing or teaching contrary to church doctrine are violating the Church Manual, to which they are accountable as pastors of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

Objection #9: – “Manuscript Releases, Vol. 10, 45.1 makes it plain that we are not to tear down the foundation of the Adventist faith.”

Let us read the statement:

“I am instructed to say to those who endeavor to tear down the foundation that has made us Seventh-day Adventists: We are God's commandment-keeping people. For the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to becloud our minds regarding the teaching of the Word--especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and the message of heaven for these last days, as given by the angels of the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the waymarks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimonies of His Spirit. **He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.**” {Manuscript Releases, Vol. 10, 45.1}

Having quoted that, we now address a thing or two. One, no one is here seeking to tear down the foundation that Ellen mentioned in the above statement. Disposing of a creed, and trying to get people to believe different doctrines are entirely distinct and separate things. To

remove falsely usurped human authority embodied in a manmade creed and enforced by the commandments of men, has nothing to do with me trying to get you to doubt the sanctuary message.

The above statement was used to oppose the removal of the Seventh-Day Adventist creed, and also, giving special reference to the last sentence in the paragraph, that we are not to question the Fundamental Beliefs. In response to this, we would like to view some of the context in which this statement was originally written.

We read some context:

"Dear Brother and Sister Kress: I did hope to have time and strength to write to you fully in this mail; but I can write but little; for I have a tired brain. Many letters come to me, and I try to respond, but ***there is for me none of that feeling of safety in writing that there once was; for sometimes a wrong interpretation is placed on my writings, and it is becoming a very serious matter to write in full confidence even to those who for years have known my views.*** I do not wish you to think that any of this applies to you. I have been free to write to you, and I am glad that you have written freely to me.

The time has come when whatever I may write in private letters to some of our brethren will do little good; for those who have not held the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end will be liable to interpret my communications in a false way. To have ministers and physicians who have long known the truth using my writings in a way that gives the impression that these writings uphold the very sentiments that are condemned by the testimonies I have received from God, places a very heavy burden on my soul. These men place such an interpretation on extracts which they take from my writings, that the reproofs given by God are made of no effect. The Lord God of heaven declares, 'If they repent, I will pardon their transgressions; but if they do not repent, I will call them to account for that which they have misinterpreted in order to serve theories that are not true. By their course, souls have been led astray, and when I cease my forbearance, because they will not repent, I will punish them for all the evil they have done by mingling false sentiments with the true. They have departed from the faith themselves, and have led others astray.'"

{Manuscript Releases, Vol. 10, 44.1, 2}

In short, Ellen White could not feel safe in writing private letters because people would take them and use them to uphold sentiments that were condemned by the testimonies that she had received from God. What testimony did Ellen White receive from God concerning creeds and the right of those in positions of trust to tell others what to believe?

What appears to be happening is that those who have used this statement to support the continuity of the creed of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, are violating the very counsel that appears in the context of the statement. They are taking something from a letter that she wrote to someone and using it in such a way as to uphold sentiments that are condemned by the testimonies that she received from God.

We quote:

"The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man. **Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction.** The Saviour declares, 'All ye are brethren.' All are exposed to temptation, and are liable to error." {Desire of Ages, 414.3}

"God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, **the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils**, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority--**not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith.** Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support." {The Great Controversy, 595.1}

And yet, in light of these statements, many claim that if the creed or decisions of the ecclesiastical council of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church says that such and such teaching is true, that it is to be regarded as the voice of God on the matter and accepted without question. And this is contradictory to plain counsel.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

"The simple [foolish] believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going." Proverbs 14:15.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1.

"No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. **We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly.**" {Review and Herald, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

So man says, "Don't question the beliefs," while God says, "Try them close. Examine them thoroughly, for the foolish believe every word."

I am ashamed that anyone, bearing the name of Adventist, would support such sentiments as, "Don't question the beliefs." I am still further ashamed that an Adventist would thus abuse Mrs. White's statements to support such Catholic mentality.

Question/Objection #10 – "If no one can interpret the Bible for others, than who is to decide what is sin when it comes to disciplining church members?"

We find that the safest position to take on this is to only to call those things "sin" that are specifically called sin (or iniquity, trespass, wickedness, etc.) in the Bible. Thus no interpretation

is really necessary. Otherwise, the Scripture becomes of a private interpretation. When it comes to matters of things that the Bible doesn't specially call sin, but conscience and/or principle however, is still involved, we hold that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind.

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammeled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.' No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.'

Romans 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity." {Desire of Ages 550.6}

Question/Objection #11 – "What if someone believes that it's okay to sin?"

Again, we see nothing in Scripture which indicates that we have a right to tell others what they are to believe. If they believe that it's okay to sin, then let them be. If they actually commit the sin, then they are to be put on church discipline.

Chapter 16

Answers to Objections (Part 2)

The intention of this article is to bring to view several different Bible texts and Ellen White statements that are presented as Adventist arguments which validate Catholicism to its core. The reason that it is desired for these arguments to be exposed is because they actually hinder the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus and all true reformation.

While there has been much hesitancy to use the following statement from Ellen White, for the reason that it can be used to justify practically every sin and abomination in the book, it finds its proper application in this article. Here it is:

"God wants us all to have common sense, and He wants us to reason from common sense. Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things."
{Manuscript Releases, Vol. 6, 354.3}

Now we enter our list of Adventist/Catholic arguments:

#1: (Adventist/Catholic Argument): “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”
Romans 16:17.

During the reformation of the 16th century, those faithful reformers of their times protested against the corruptions and false doctrines held by the Roman Catholic Church. Romans 16:17 is a wonderful verse for Catholic clergymen to use in aiding them in their efforts to shut away the light of heaven from shining on their flocks. True reformation often results in separation and division, and just because someone is preaching a message or teaching a doctrine that causes divisions and offences contrary to what we have learned, does not always mean that we should avoid them. “Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things.” Catholics would love for their members to avoid listening to the Protestants and Adventists that teach doctrines contrary to what they have learned in the Catholic Church. Adventists use this same verse in a way that effectually cuts them off from being corrected if they are in error, just like the Catholics do.

"The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what." {Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, 707.1}

#2: (Adventist/Catholic Argument) “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Is Paul saying that we should all speak the same errors and that we be perfectly joined together in doing evil and judging wrongly? Of course not. Please consider the following statements carefully.

“God calls for unity among His people in these last days, but there cannot be unity without firm adherence to right principles.” {Manuscript Releases, Vol. 10, 46.2}

“Christ calls for unity. But He does not call for us to unify on wrong practices. The God of heaven draws a sharp contrast between pure, elevating, ennobling truth and false, misleading doctrines. He calls sin and impenitence by the right name. He does not gloss over wrongdoing with a coat of untempered mortar.” {Manuscript Releases, Vol. 17, 306.2}

“After a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God. They dared not tolerate errors fatal to their own souls, and set an example which would imperil the faith of their children and children’s children. **To secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war.**

“Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls were revived in the hearts of God’s professed people. There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ. {The Great Controversy, 45.3-46.1}

Now back to our Catholic argument. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10.

How fitting would this verse be for Catholicism back in the days when the reformers were teaching things that were different from the teachings and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, which reformed teachings caused divisions and ended up causing a great separation? Were the protesting reformers and the Catholic Church all speaking the same things and being perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment? Well of course not. And praise the Lord for that! This argument is used by Adventists today, in many cases hindering all

true reformation in the church, just like it had done back in the Dark Ages. "Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things."

#3: (Adventist/Catholic Argument) "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14.

This verse appears to be greatly abused by churches today and clergymen of the same. Says Christ:

"Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." Matthew 23:8-10.

Thus we have one Teacher, one Father, one Master, one above us—Jesus Christ—and the rest of us are all brethren; we are all equals. This being the case—that we are all equal before God—having only one true Teacher over us, we too are part of that multitude of counselors.

Churches abuse this and similar verses in different ways, one of which will be addressed here. Says Peter:

"No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." 2 Peter 1:20.

This is simply to mean that no man nor group of men have the right or place to get together and independently and privately interpret the Scriptures for others, much less require others to accept their interpretations on pain of excommunication. What happens, however, is that the clergymen of the church get together, privately interpret the Scriptures and require others to accept their interpretations, and then say, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Anyone who opposes the interpretations of this group by holding different views, are told that they are privately interpreting the Scriptures, failing to see that this is exactly what they have done themselves. They also fail to realize that since we are all brethren in Christ, that we too are part of the Bible's "multitude of counsellors" and actually have a say in that counsel.

It is claimed by these independent groups of counselors that we should accept their private interpretation of the Scriptures because there is safety in group counsel. While it is true that there is safety in group counsel, it doesn't change the fact that we are all part of the counsel. Nor does it change the fact that sometimes the multitude of counselors are corrupt and/or in error. The Roman Catholic Church is a great example of this. The Jewish counsel of Jesus' time is an even better example. Virtually the entire Jewish counsel was corrupt and in grave error, with the exception of Gamaliel and perhaps a few others. Remember, "Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things." If the council is corrupt or in error, is there any safety in it? Of course not.

Adventists today use the respected text above to justify their getting together and privately interpreting the Scriptures for others and requiring acceptance of their interpretations in order for one to become a member of God's church. All of this is out of harmony with the plain teachings of the word of God.

"The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man. ***Many claim that a position of trust in the church gives them authority to dictate what other men shall believe and what they shall do. This claim God does not sanction. The Saviour declares, 'All ye are brethren.' All are exposed to temptation, and are liable to error.*** Upon no finite being can we depend for guidance." {Desire of Ages, 414.3}

#4: (Adventist/Catholic Argument) "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Proverbs 19:27.

"Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things." It is dangerous to just assume that if someone is teaching something against what you believe, that listening to them may cause you to err from true knowledge. It is dangerous to just assume that they are speaking lies. It is our responsibility to listen to what they are saying and to test it by the word of God before we rashly shut our ears away from hearing what we believe is error (See Bible text and statement below). Imagine Roman Catholicism using this verse to compel their members not to listen to the message of Adventism. What then? "Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things."

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

Precious light is to shine forth from the Word of God, and let no one presume to dictate what shall or what shall not be brought before the people in the messages of enlightenment that He shall send, and so quench the Spirit of God. Whatever may be his position of authority, no one has a right to shut away the light from the people. When a message comes in the name of the Lord to His people, no one may excuse himself from an investigation of its claims. No one can afford to stand back in an attitude of indifference and self-confidence, and say: 'I know what is truth. I am satisfied with my position. I have set my stakes, and I will not be moved away from my position, whatever may come. I will not listen to the message of this messenger; for I know that it can not be truth.' It was from pursuing this very course that the popular churches were left in partial darkness, and that is why the messages of heaven have not reached them. {Testimonies on Sabbath School Work, 65.1}

#5: (Adventist/Catholic Argument) "There have ever been in the church those who are constantly inclined toward individual independence. They seem unable to realize that independence of spirit is liable to lead the human agent to have too much confidence in himself and to trust in his own judgment rather than to respect the counsel and highly esteem the judgment of his brethren, especially of those in the offices that God has appointed for the leadership of His people. God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for he who does this despises the voice of God." {Acts of the Apostles, 163.2}

The claim is that Acts of the Apostles 163.2 says that to disregard or despise the authority of the church is to despise the voice of God. Therefore, it is claimed, we should just believe and do whatever the General Conference says.

Let us read another statement:

“O, my very soul is drawn out in these things! Men who have not learned to submit themselves to the control and discipline of God, are not competent to train the youth, to deal with human minds. It is just as much an impossibility for them to do this work as it would be for them to make a world. ***That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be,--that is past.*** What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle.” {The General Conference Bulletin, April 3, 1901 par. 25}

In other words, the voice of the General Conference represents the voice of God *only* when the voice of the General Conference is representing the voice of God. If the General Conference is speaking contrary to the law and the testimony, they aren’t representing the voice of God. It was the same with the Jewish church, and it is the same today. Again, “Circumstances alter conditions. Circumstances change the relation of things.”

#6: (Adventist/Catholic Argument) “There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for ‘in the multitude of counselors there is safety.’” (Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, 293.1)

We believe that the reader has sufficient enough information to answer this argument so long as it is understood:

- a. That God does not sanction the claim that those in positions of trust have a right to tell others what to believe. (See DA 414.3)
- b. That the Bible *only* is to be our creed, the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. (See GC 595.1 and RH, December 15, 1885 par. 16)
- c. That God wants us all to have common sense, and He wants us to reason from common sense. That circumstances alter conditions and change the relation of things. (See 6MR, 354.3)
- d. That the Roman Catholic church would love to use this statement to see to it that no one believes contrary to her dogmas.
- e. ... etc.

And in this we make defense of our case, not because we feel a need of it, but for the sake of those honest inquirers who may be benefited by it.

All further objections that might be given hereafter against said series of articles may not be answered, not because there are no answers to give, but merely because of how easy it is to come up with hundreds of objections which could easily eat up our time should we choose to spend it unnecessarily in answering objections made by those only desiring a battle. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Romans 14:5.

Chapter 17

Pure Religion

The following article is here given to conclude the main part of this book by showing how Jesus regarded creeds, and by revealing His active, caring love for the human race.

Imagine a church. A church organized for service. A church, not organized to prove a set of doctrines or beliefs, but a church organized to help others regardless of their race, religion, or creed. A church that doesn't try to prove why it is right and others are wrong. A church that is blind to theoretical arguments that benefit no one. A church whose only goal is to help those in need. A church whose only existence is to be kind and caring to all, and to show themselves the friends of all. Would not this be the true church, the true religion?

A man by the name of Jesus walked this earth approximately 2000 years ago. This man, "ordained twelve" as the record has it. (Mark 3:14.) Twelve what? The record doesn't say. All it says is that they were ordained, *for service*.

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. **It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.** From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; **and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God.** Ephesians 3:10." {Acts of the Apostles, 9.1}

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," said:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. My brethren, **have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.**" James 1:27-2:1.

Looking at the principle behind what James is expressing in example form, he is essentially saying that pure religion consists of love for others that is manifested in *actually helping people*, and also, to not do evil, which by its very nature hurts people. Pure religion is not seeking to show why it is right and other religions are wrong. Pure religion is not about proving favorite theories or being able to defend all of your doctrinal beliefs, regardless of whether or not they are true. Pure religion is about helping others. This was the religion of the Jesus who was called Christ. He wanted to help, not debate; to minister, not to prove. Have we gone so far out of the way as to use the truth as a means of separating ourselves from others because we are so stuck on proving our religion and teachings true? In focusing so much on proving true the religion

that says we should help others, have we failed to help others? In seeking to prove our religion true, have we made it null and void?

"The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago--a revelation of Christ. A great work of reform is demanded, and it is only through the grace of Christ that the work of restoration, physical, mental, and spiritual, can be accomplished.

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. ***The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."***

"There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit." {The Ministry of Healing, 143.2-143.4}

When Jesus bade others saying, "Follow Me," He was bidding them to follow after His example. And what was His example? He didn't sermonize, He didn't debate, He didn't try to explain why He was right. All He did was minister to the needs of others. While He showed Himself well capable of defending His position, He didn't care to do it. He cared only to comfort the sorrowful, to heal the wounded, to inspire hope in the hopeless, and to befriend the world. This was His religion. His religion did not consist in studying the Scriptures to show why He was right or others were wrong and then crooning over His victory in silencing His opponents, for His religion was the religion of the Scriptures. (See Proverbs 24:17, 18). Instead, the religion of Jesus consisted in loving the world through living deeds of active kindness. And this is what He meant when He said, "Follow Me." In no wise did it mean, "Now you can believe as I do." Such connection is simply not there.

The professed Christian world has made religion consist of little more than apologetics, yet this was not the religion of Christ. Christians have taken upon themselves the name of Christ, but in vain, for they have failed to take up His religion. Instead of coming close to humanity by showing themselves interested in the needs of others by deeds of active benevolence, they have separated themselves from humanity by making a religion that is little more than a system of beliefs which separates them from the world, and all to the neglect of the needy. Oh the crime of it all!

"Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But ***Christ came to break down every wall of partition.*** He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth.

"The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God.

No question of policy influenced His movements. ***He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies.*** That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life.” {The Ministry of Healing, 25.3-25.4}

Christ recognized no distinction of creed. What does that mean? A creed is just a set of beliefs. So then, Christ recognized no distinction of beliefs; He didn’t even see them. All of the creedal walls that separated the Jews from the Samaritans from the Gentiles, and so on, He did not recognize. He passed right through them, as though they existed not.

Should Christ look at a group of people today, He would not see Catholics, Adventists, Baptists, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc. He would only see people that allowed themselves to be divided by labels.

The reason that God calls His people to ‘come out from among them and be separate,’ was so that they “touch not the unclean thing.” The reason that God calls His people out of Babylon, is not so that they can separate themselves by a holding to a different creed, making sure to recognize the distinction between theirs and others’, but so that they will ‘not be partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues.’ (See 2 Corinthians 6:17 and Revelation 18:4.)

Did Jesus come out from among them and be separate? The Scripture says that He ate with “many publicans and sinners.” (See Matthew 9:10, 11.) The command to God’s people to come out and be separate, was not a command to set up walls of partition that separated Jew from Gentile.

“Christ was not exclusive, and He had given special offense to the Pharisees by departing in this respect from their rigid rules. He found the domain of religion fenced in by high walls of seclusion, as too sacred a matter for everyday life. ***These walls of partition He overthrew. In His contact with men He did not ask, What is your creed? To what church do you belong? He exercised His helping power in behalf of all who needed help.*** Instead of secluding Himself in a hermit's cell in order to show His heavenly character, He labored earnestly for humanity. He inculcated the principle that Bible religion does not consist in the mortification of the body. He taught that pure and undefiled religion is not meant only for set times and special occasions. At all times and in all places He manifested a loving interest in men, and shed about Him the light of a cheerful piety. All this was a rebuke to the Pharisees. It showed that ***religion does not consist in selfishness, and that their morbid devotion to personal interest was far from being true godliness. This had roused their enmity against Jesus, so that they tried to enforce His conformity to their regulations.***” {The Desire of Ages, 86.3}

Says the man who was claimed to be the wisest that ever lived:

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.

And said the Saviour:

"A new* commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 13:34.

* The commandment was new to the disciples, in that the pure religion of loving others no longer existed in the church, and thus they had never known it. It was a new commandment to them, though the principle of it was actually given long ago (See Leviticus 19:18.)

The conclusion of this whole matter is that true religion only consists in actively loving others. Not in debating and separating from others over this or that belief, and/or by the establishing of some creed or creating of some new church or religion, but in illustrating from the heart the active love that Jesus manifested to the world. Practical godliness is the only thing that God esteems of any value. Outside of this, pure religion has no existence.

"The only question asked in the judgment will be, "Have they been obedient to My commandments?" Petty strife and contention over questions of no importance has no part in God's great plan. Those who teach the truth should be men of solid minds, who will not lead their hearers into a field of thistles, as it were, and leave them there. {Gospel Workers 315.1}}

In the judgment, the lovely Jesus who is the same, "yesterday, and to day, and for ever," will not be found asking, "What did they believe? To what church did they belong?" The only question considered in the great judgment is, "Have they loved one another, as I have loved them?" Ask yourself that question, and that question only.

(Note: For those objecting that there must be some order and organization, we would like to point out that never in any of these articles was an assault made against order or organization. The assault was made against that which hinders the growth of practical godliness, both in an individual's life, and in its spread to others. In fact, this article supported organization. The church "was organized for service.")

Chapter 18

Public Call to Repentance and Reformation

This chapter is publically calling upon the Seventh-Day Adventist Church to repent and reform.

Seventh-Day Adventists, we address you as a *church entity*. You are guilty of setting yourselves on God's throne by demanding acceptance of your interpretations of Scripture—as if they were the standard—on pain of excommunication or denial of acceptance into God's church. The rejection of your interpretations of what constitutes Scriptural truth is considered to be the rejection of Scriptural truth itself, thus if anyone rejects your human words of interpretation, they are considered to have rejected the words of God.

You have claimed that you have authority to tell others what they must believe and what they must do to be a part of God's church, and this claim God does not sanction.

Contrary to inspired instruction, you have presumed to dictate what shall and what shall not be brought before the people in messages of enlightenment that God may send. This right you do not have. In doing this you have set yourself up to quench the Spirit of God, just as did Roman Catholicism of old.

You have made, not the Bible and the Bible alone your creed, but have created a fully functional creed of your own, separate and distinct from the Bible, and in thus doing you are prohibiting the Bible as surely as Rome did, though in a subtler way.

You have officially set up a state of things so as to excommunicate any reformation that doesn't harmonize with your fallible, creedal interpretations of God's word.

You are now publically called upon to repent of these crimes and to reform as promptly as possible. Please be aware that failure to repent of these crimes, and reform from them, may result in "acts of God," though we pray that this not need be the case.

“If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.”

~ Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3, 280.3

Petition #1

Concerning the Fundamental Beliefs

This is a public petition to officially discard the Fundamental Beliefs (creed) of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and to restore the Bible, and the Bible alone (no interpretations offered), to its rightful place as the only standard of faith and discipline. All in favor please print this page, sign below, and give to the respective church entity and/or representative.

Signature: _____

Petition #2

Concerning the Church Manual

This is a public petition to officially discard the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual (commandments of men), and to restore the Bible to its rightful place as the only Church Manual and the only rule of discipline. All in favor please print this page, sign below, and give to the respective church entity and/or representative.

Signature: _____

CREED

God's word is seen
Man is so mean
He simplifies God's word

"It's not a creed,
But 'we believe;'
So please don't be absurd."

So time goes on
"Beliefs" are gone
For test of them they made

The creed is come
Their mind is numb
His word did they degrade

Now next to God
They look so odd
Remove them from His throne!

The words of man
Deserve the can!
God's words; and His alone!

Signatures Concerning This Book

The following testimonials bear witness to what they therein state.

I, James Prest, am a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and testify that the information contained in this book is true.

I, Mary MacIntyre, am a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and agree with all of what James Prest has said in this book.

A Review of This Book

by Leilana Bearce

“When I sat down to read James’s book, it was with anticipation and (I admit) a little trepidation. James writes exactly what he believes without any hesitation; and with this new topic, I had no idea what to expect. But when I got to the end and read the last page, I realized that not only had I enjoyed the book, it had also made me think deeply about the Seventh-day Adventist denomination of which I am a member. As James points out, we need more of Jesus and less of man. The Bible must be the creed on which everything is based, or we will fall. So, to the reader: read carefully and make sure you don’t skim over this book lightly. It’s got an important message.”

Signature: 